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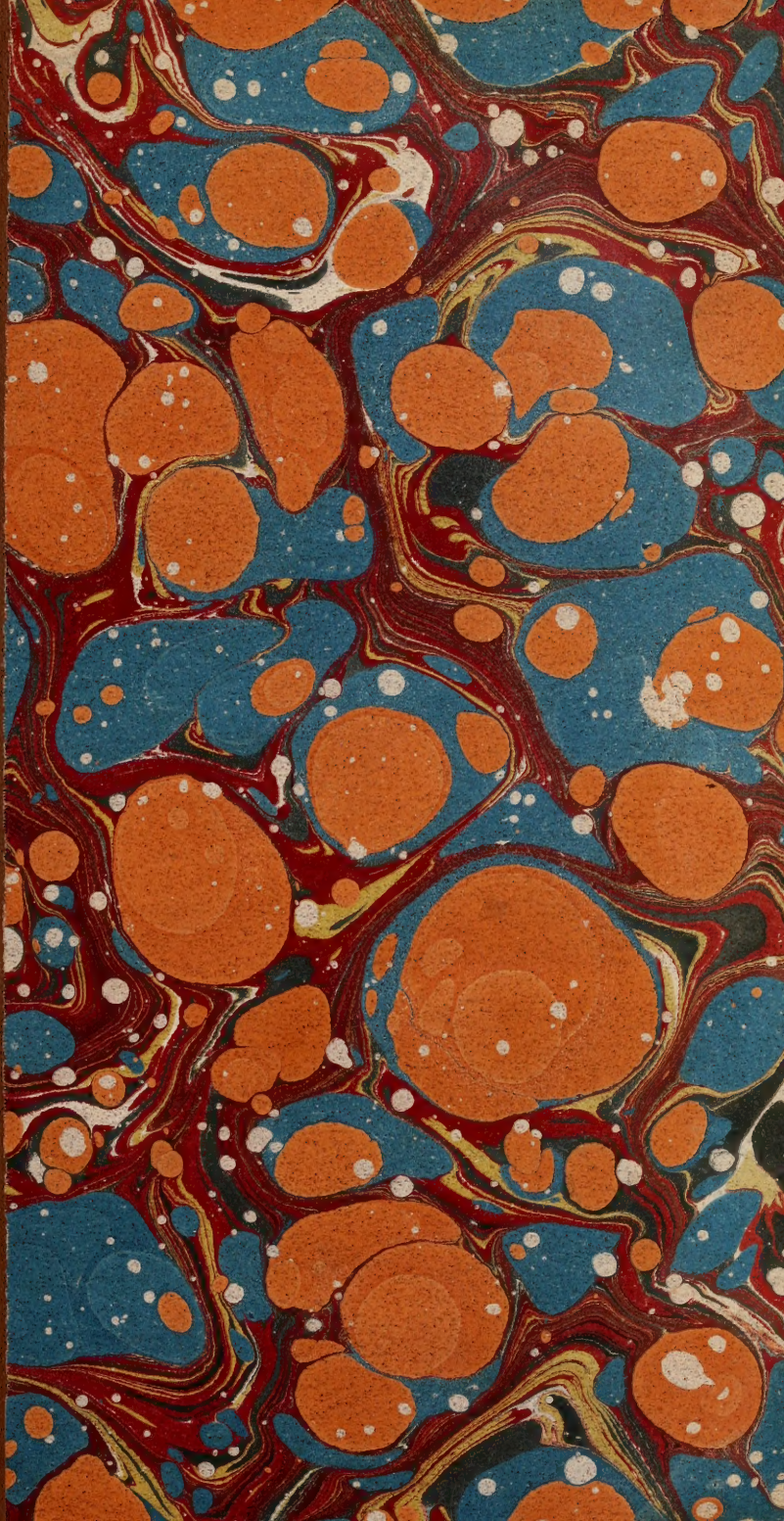
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THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND,
FROM THE
ACCESSION OF GEORGE III.,
1760,
TO
THE ACCESSION OF QUEEN VICTORIA,
1837.

BY THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B.D.,

LATE CANON OF PETERBOROUGH.

BEING THE COMPLETION OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM
THE INVASION OF JULIUS CÆSAR TO THE PRESENT REIGN.

A NEW EDITION,

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR, COPIOUS NOTES, CORRECTIONS,
IMPROVEMENTS, AND ENLARGEMENT.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A PRELIMINARY ESSAY.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE SEVENTH VOLUME.

CHAPTER LXII.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1823.

State of the country at the beginning of 1823—Opening of the session—Debates on Spain and the holy alliance—Affairs of Spain, and restoration of Ferdinand VII.—Affairs of Portugal—Agricultural and commercial interests—Free trade—The budget—Affairs in Ireland—Catholic question—Fracas between Mr. Brougham and Mr. Canning—Motions to reform the criminal law—Lord A. Hamilton's motion to reform the state of Scotch representation—Mr. Canning's opinions on the subject of reform, &c.—New London-bridge bill—Mr. Creevey's motion respecting the four and a half per cent. duty on the Leeward Islands—Expenses of the coronation—Other instances of extravagant expenditure exposed by Mr. Hume—The king's donation of the library of George III. to the public—Irish tithe commutation bill—Dissenters' marriage act thrown out—Prorogation of parliament—State of the country—Appointment of consuls to the South American colonies—Sentiments of Mr. Canning on this subject, &c.—Extract from his speech at Plymouth—State of the country at the beginning of 1824—Meeting of parliament—Attack on ministers on account of the occupation of Spain, &c.—Recognition of South American independence—Financial statement—Repeal of taxes, bounties, &c.—Steps towards a more unrestricted system of trade—Debates on the same—Alien bill, &c.—State of Ireland, catholic association, &c. . . page 1

CHAPTER LXIII. -

Parliamentary discussions—State of the colonies—Affairs of Spain and Portugal—Death of Louis XVIII.—East Indian affairs under lord Amherst's presidency—Case of Mr. Buckingham—Burmese war—Peace concluded on terms favorable to the British government—Commercial treaty with the court of Ava—The rajah of Bhurtpoor reinstated by lord Combermere—Arrival of lord William Bentinck as governor-general . . . page 25

CHAPTER LXIV.

Meeting of parliament—Bill for the suppression of unlawful associations in Ireland—Catholic relief bill—Its failure in the house of lords—Speech of the duke of York, and his great popularity with the high-church party—Legal reforms—Increased salary of the judges—Unitarian marriage-act—Act against combinations among workmen—Free trade system—Corn laws—Financial statements—Close of session—Great commercial panic—Domestic events—Review of foreign relations—Opening of the session of 1826—Means adopted for the restoration of commercial confidence—Modification of the corn laws—Debates on restrictions of foreign manufactures—State of finances—Criminal code—State of the colonies—Scotch representation—Removal of attainders—Dissolution of parliament—Dissensions in the cabinet—Violence of parties at the general election—Meeting of the new parliament—Indemnity bill—Vigor of Mr. Canning's policy in Portugal—Capture of Missolonghi—Opening of the Menai bridge—Death of the duke of York—Duke of Wellington commander-in-chief—Catholic question—Illness of lord Liverpool—Dissolution of the cabinet—Appointment of Mr. Canning as premier . . . 73

CHAPTER LXV.

Re-assembling of parliament—Explanations by the seceding members of the cabinet—Formidable opposition to the ministry—A portion of the whig party joins the administration—Rejection of the new corn bill by the lords—Financial statements—Corrupt boroughs—Improvement of the criminal code—Close of the session—Death of Mr. Canning—His character—Lord Goderich prime minister—Dissensions, and dissolution of the cabinet—Duke of Wellington appointed premier—Review of foreign policy—Treaty with France and Russia—Battle of Navarino—Meeting

of parliament—Dispute between the duke of Wellington and Mr. Huskisson—State of the finances—Grant to the family of Mr. Canning—State of the currency—Budget—Repeal of the test and corporation acts—Catholic claims—Resignation of Mr. Huskisson and other members of the cabinet—Prorogation of parliament—War between Russia and Turkey—State of Portugal—Disturbances in Ireland—Recall of the marquis of Anglesea—Death and character of the earl of Liverpool—Trial and execution of Burke at Edinburgh—Opening of the London University and St. Katharine Docks—Review of foreign policy.
page 128

CHAPTER LXVI.

Agitations in Ireland—Election of Mr. O'Connell for Clare—Difficulties of the cabinet—Determination of the government to concede the catholic claims—Opening of parliament—Suppression of the catholic association—Rejection of Mr. Peel at Oxford—Debates and passing of the emancipation bill—Disfranchisement of the Irish forty-shilling freeholders—Financial statements—Motion for parliamentary reform—Prorogation of parliament—Affairs of the continent—Agricultural and commercial distress—State of affairs in Ireland—Conflagration of York Minster—Opening of new Fleet Market and Post Office—New police—Meeting of parliament in 1830—Distress of the nation denied by ministers—Speeches, &c., on occasion of the address—Motions for inquiry, &c.—Debates on reductions and taxation, &c.—Committee on East Indian company's charter—Debate on the currency—The budget—Beer bill—Reform of parliament—Debates on subjects connected with it—Bill for amending the law on libel—Alterations in courts of justice—Illness of the king—Bill to authorise a stamp for the sign manual—Death of George IV. 179

CHAPTER LXVII.

WILLIAM IV.—1830.

Sentiments of the whigs—King proclaimed, and parliament opened—Addresses—Symptoms of disagreement between the whigs and ministers—Opposition of the tories—Explanations on both sides, and declaration of hostilities—First court of William IV.; his declaration to the prelates, reception of addresses, &c.—Prorogation and dissolution of the parliament—Measures taken by the whigs to pave their way to office—Revolutions in France

and the Netherlands—Causes which rendered the elections in England unfavorable to ministers—Meeting of the new parliament—King's speech, addresses, &c.—Duke of Wellington's denunciations against reform—Other causes of popular dissatisfaction with the government; case of Belgium; postponement of the king's visit to Guildhall—Notice taken of it in parliament—Defeat of ministers, and resignation—State of parties—Formation of earl Grey's administration—Mr. Stanley's defeat at Preston—Regency bill passed—Parliament adjourns—Opening of the Liverpool and Manchester railway, and death of Mr. Huskisson—State of foreign nations—State of public mind regarding parliamentary reform—Introduction and progress of the reform bill through the house of commons—Dissolution of parliament—New parliament assembled—Progress of the bill continued—Budget, &c.—Advance of the bill through the house of commons—Bill read a first time in the upper house—Opening of London Bridge—King's assent to the queen's dower-bill—Grant to the duchess of Kent—Coronation—Progress of the reform bill in the lords—Rejection of it—Prorogation of parliament—State of the country—Appearance of cholera in the north—Foreign affairs—Parliament assembles—Re-introduction of the reform bill—Its progress to its final settlement . . . page 239

CHAPTER LXVIII.

General election—State of the continent—Discussion of the slave question—Opening of the first reformed parliament—Bill for the suppression of disturbances in Ireland—Irish church bill—Loan to the clergy of Ireland—Act for the extinction of slavery in the British colonies—Renewal of the Bank charter—Settlement of the East India question—Factory bill—Corporation commission—Foreign politics—Close of the session—Death of lord Grenville—Succeeded as chancellor of Oxford by the duke of Wellington—Opening of the session of 1834—Joint address of the lords and commons—Divisions in the cabinet—Renewal of Irish coercion bill—Earl Grey resigns, and lord Melbourne is created premier—Rejection of the Irish tithes bill by the peers—Grievances of dissenters—Commutation of tithes—Poor-laws amendment act—Debates on agriculture—Shipping interest—Financial statements—Close of the session—Unpopularity of ministers—Dissolution of the cabinet—Administration of sir Robert Peel—Dissolution of parliament—General election—Ecclesiastical commission—Meeting of the new parliament—Election of Mr. Abercrombie as speaker—Defeat of ministers on the address—Orange societies—Malt tax—Dissenters' marriage bill—Irish tithes bill—Defeat of ministers—Resignation of sir Robert Peel, and recall of lord Melbourne's administration—Lord Melbourne's new administration—Adjournment of the house—Seve-

ral ministers lose their seats—Ministers proceed with caution—Municipal reform—Debates on the subject—Consideration in commons of the bill for regulating the Irish churches—Rejected by the lords—Bill to suspend payment of sums advanced to the Irish clergy—Protest from the Scotch assembly's committee—Orange lodges—Amendment of the reform bill—Motion to admit ladies to the house of commons—Agricultural distress—Whole system of taxation brought under notice—The budget—Canadian affairs—Close of the session; and king's speech—Mr. O'Connell's progress—Cape of Good Hope—Resumption of Canadian affairs—Affairs of foreign nations—Domestic occurrences—Queen's visit to Oxford—Royal visit to Greenwich Hospital—State of our merchant marine page 332

CHAPTER LXIX.

Opening of parliament and king's speech—Addresses, &c.—Measures relating to Ireland—Leading measures relating to England—Ecclesiastical commission, &c.—English municipal act—Free conference—Bill to allow counsel to felons—and to remunerate medical witnesses—For abolition of imprisonment for debt—Bill regarding a division of the office of lord chancellor—Acts and motions of Mr. O'Connell, &c.—Agricultural distress, &c.—Motion by the marquis of Chandos relating to it—Other motions—The budget—Affairs of the Mauritius—Discussions on the Canadian discontents—Affairs of foreign nations; Spain, Poland, Russia—Proposals for an address to liberate the prisoners at Ham—Affairs of Greece—Close of the session—King's speech—Affairs in Ireland—Affairs of Canada—Jamaica—France—Spain and Portugal—Holland and Belgium—Germanic diet—United States—States of South America—Domestic occurrences—Death of lord Stowell—Private life of their majesties—State of parties at the beginning of 1837—Opening of parliament by commission—King's speech—Address, &c.—State of Ireland—Protestant meeting in Dublin—Motion for a bill to amend the Irish municipal corporations—Debates thereon; discussions upon lord Mulgrave's government—Debates on the Irish municipal bill—Poor-laws for Ireland—Irish tithe question—Irish national education—Question of church-rates—Ministerial plan for their abolition—Conduct of sir F. Burdett—Failure of church-rate abolition scheme, &c.—Motions for many organic changes in the constitution; and failure of them—Debates on the poor-law, and committee of inquiry—Canadian affairs—State of the banking system and money concerns—Crisis in the American trade, abuses, &c.—Foreign policy of the whigs, especially regarding the peninsula—Affairs of Russia; the United States, Mexico, and Texas—Colonial affairs; Canada, &c.; Jamaica; New South Wales—France—Spain—Portugal—Austria—Germany—

Belgium and Holland—Switzerland—Italy and Sicily—Sweden and Norway—Greece—Russia and Circassia—Turkey—United States—Mexico, &c.—British parliamentary affairs—State of parties—Speech of Mr. Roebuck against ministers—Views of ministers—Illness and death of the king—Proclamation of queen Victoria page 456

THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER LXII.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1823.

State of the country at the beginning of 1823—Opening of the session—Debates on Spain and the holy alliance—Affairs of Spain, and restoration of Ferdinand VII.—Affairs of Portugal—Agricultural and commercial interests—Free trade—The budget—Affairs in Ireland—Catholic question—Fracas between Mr. Brougham and Mr. Canning—Motions to reform the criminal law—Lord A. Hamilton's motion to reform the state of Scotch representation—Mr. Canning's opinions on the subject of reform, &c.—New London-bridge bill—Mr. Creevey's motion respecting the four and a half per cent. duty on the Leeward Islands—Expenses of the coronation—Other instances of extravagant expenditure exposed by Mr. Hume—The king's donation of the library of George III. to the public—Irish tithe commutation bill—Dissenters' marriage act thrown out—Prorogation of parliament—State of the country—Appointment of consuls to the South American colonies—Sentiments of Mr. Canning on this subject, &c.—Extract from his speech at Plymouth—State of the country at the beginning of 1824—Meeting of parliament—Attack on ministers on account of the occupation of Spain, &c.—Recognition of South American independence—Financial statement—Repeal of taxes, bounties, &c.—Steps towards a more unrestricted system of trade—Debates on the same—Alien bill, &c.—State of Ireland, catholic association, &c.

At the opening of this year, the country presented a more favorable aspect than it had assumed for some time past: commerce and manufactures continued to improve; and the distress of farmers was somewhat

State of the
country.

CHAP.
LXII.

1823.

Meeting of
parliament.

mitigated, though landed proprietors were still clamorous for relief. Many petitions on this subject were voted at county meetings; the most remarkable of which was held at Norwich, on the third of January, where a petition in unison with the views of the opposition was proposed and favorably received; but Mr. Cobbett, by way of amendment, presented an address, elaborately, though briefly drawn up; the principal propositions of which were, the reformation of a corrupt parliament; an appropriation of church property to the service of the state; and an equitable adjustment, with regard, not only to the public debt, but to all debts and contracts between man and man: this amendment was carried by acclamation.

The session was opened on the fourth of February by commission, with a speech that elicited general approbation; particularly that part of it, which expressed his majesty's determination that he would be no party to those proceedings at Verona which sanctioned the interference of foreigners with the internal affairs of Spain; and that he would use his earnest endeavors and good offices to prevent the calamity of war between that country and France. Mr. Canning, having vacated his seat for Liverpool,¹ had not yet returned to parliament; but an energetic philippic, pronounced by Mr. Brougham against meditated aggressions of the holy alliance, electrified the house: being, however, felt in Spain, it produced an injurious effect on the constitutionalists, by the fatal confidence with which it inspired them. Even in our house of peers a spirit favorable to the liberal cause now manifested itself; and this, added to unanimity of public sentiment, inspired the party in opposition with hopes of a triumph over their opponents: lord Ellenborough, therefore, on the twenty-fourth of April, made a motion for an address to his majesty, expressing, in high terms, a condemnation of the conduct of France and the other allied powers, as well as of the British cabi-

¹ Considering the duties imposed on him by the representation of that important town incompatible with those of his office, he resigned it, and was elected member for Harwich; his friend, Mr. Huskisson, succeeding him for Liverpool.

net, in requiring Spain to alter her constitution at their dictation: after a long debate, however, it appeared, that our ministers had used every practicable effort to prevent an attack on Spain; and had acted the part of sincere friends in advising her to modify a constitution, which, being strongly democratic, was very inimical to the principles of true liberty. The motion was rejected by an immense majority; and a similar one, introduced into the lower house by Mr. Macdonald, was similarly disposed of, after a debate which lasted three nights. Mr. Canning, in a brilliant and argumentative harangue, produced so powerful a conviction that every thing had been done which duty and sound policy required in our late transactions with Spain and the allied powers, that Mr. Brougham became anxious to save his party from exposure to defeat by avoiding a division: in this artifice, however, he was foiled by his antagonist, who insisted on the question being put; and as opposition members tried to escape, by quitting the house, their opponents obliged the speaker, according to its rules, to declare the numbers; when the result gave to ministers an overwhelming majority of 372 against 20.

No regular motion was again made on this subject; and all things in Spain favored the cause of the holy allies. Though public feeling in Great Britain was roused to indignation by the perfidious conduct of the French government, yet it must be said, that public judgment was averse to our entering into a war, for the preservation of a constitution not worth preserving, and unsupported by the great mass of the people. The *hero*, therefore, of the Trocadero, at the head of a large army, supported by the intire resources of an undistracted monarchy, and with the confederated powers of Europe in reserve, found no great difficulty in triumphing over a cause, which was not only opposed by all the bigotry of the Spanish nation, but betrayed by the very troops and leaders who had sworn to uphold it: in a single, and almost bloodless campaign, despotism was restored, together with Ferdinand VII.; who, having been released by the con-

CHAP.
LXII.
—
1823.

stitutionalists from *surveillance* at Cadiz, exhibited the gratitude of a Bourbon, by innumerable sentences of death, imprisonment, and exile, which followed his restoration. The advance of the French army into Spain was a signal of revolt for the Portuguese royalists, headed by the queen and her second son, Don Miguel: by their intrigues, the inconstant soldiery, ignorant of the object of either party, were excited to destroy that slight frame-work of a constitution which they had raised, and to replace arbitrary power in the hands of the king.

The distress of our landed interests had been discussed in the house of commons early this session; and subsequently on a proposition of Mr. Whitmore for reducing the import price of grain two shillings a year, until it should fall to sixty shillings. The motion was negatived; but a disposition was manifested by government to open the trade in corn: the foreign trade committee was at the same time re-appointed, and farther steps were taken to free commerce from restrictions: in prosecuting this more liberal line of policy, ministers acted cautiously and prudently; for they knew that the restrictive system involved so many interests and prejudices, and had taken such deep root in many minds, that it must be gradually relaxed: even where it could be abandoned safely and without delay, it was difficult to persuade men to give it up.

On the twenty-first of February, the new chancellor of the exchequer brought forward his budget; and, discarding the old scheme of financial shifts and mystification, put the house in possession of his views with a candor and simplicity of statement that elicited much applause even from the opponents of government: the total revenue of the year was estimated at £57,096,988; and the expenditure, including the interest of the debt, at £49,852,786; leaving a clear surplus of above £7,000,000: thence he proposed to relieve the burdens of the country by a repeal of assessed taxes to the amount of £2,000,000, retaining the other £5,000,000 toward the liquidation of the

national debt. In this arrangement, rejecting what he considered the delusion of a larger nominal sinking-fund, which in fact had generally been appropriated to different purposes, he swept away the cumbrous machinery which supported it; and, by placing the financial system of the country on a more intelligible foundation, obtained much applause, and carried his estimates for the year with very slight opposition.

CHAP.
LXII.
1823.

No small portion of the session was wasted in discussing the daring insolence exhibited by agents of the ascendant party in Dublin. The government of lord Wellesley was too impartial and enlightened to escape abuse from the Orange faction: he had prohibited them from dressing up the statue of king William in College-green; a ceremony which perpetuated animosity, and frequently led to riot and bloodshed: the Orangemen, however, took fire at this interference with their insulting display of superiority; and when his lordship, on the fourteenth of December, visited the theatre, some wretches threw a bottle at him from the gallery. Three persons were taken into custody; and the attorney-general indicted them for a misdemeanor, instead of a capital offence: bills of indictment were found against two only by the grand jury; and as two persons cannot commit a riot, the finding was nugatory: Mr. Plunkett then filed an *ex officio* information against these persons, whom, on evidence received, he believed guilty; but the petty jury could not agree in their verdict, and the prisoners were discharged: the matter was subjected to much tedious investigation in parliament, which tended at all events to show the daring manner in which juries were packed, and the name of justice was abused in Ireland.

On the seventeenth of April a motion for a committee on the catholic claims was made by Mr. Plunkett, but lost; the question of adjournment being carried by 313 voices against 111. The previous discussion was remarkable for an attack on Canning, fiercer than the susceptible temperament of that gentleman could bear with patience. Mr. Tierney, who had declared

Facts
of Mr.
Brougham
and Mr.
Canning.

CHAP.
LXII.
1823.

that ministers deserted the question of catholic emancipation, was followed in the debate by Mr. Brougham; and he, after praising the single, manly, and upright conduct of Mr. Peel, who had never swerved from his opinions, and who had not taken office on a secret understanding to abandon the question in substance, while he continued to sustain it in words, contrasted this conduct with the supposed delinquency of Mr. Canning; who, 'when the point was, whether he should submit to a sentence of transportation to India, or be condemned to hard labor at home; when his fate, in fact, depended on lord chancellor Eldon, and his own sentiments on the catholic question, had exhibited such a specimen of monstrous truckling for office, as the whole history of political tergiversation could scarcely furnish.' At this moment, Canning, who for some time had labored to control his emotions, and sat with his eye fixed on the member that was speaking, suddenly started up, and interrupted him by exclaiming—'I rise to say, it is false.' A deep silence for a few seconds ensued; after which, the speaker called on the right honorable secretary to retract an expression, which any individual of his high rank and office must know to be a complete violation of the rules and orders of the house: Mr. Canning, however, though sorry to have used a word which violated decorum, declared, that he would not for any consideration retract the sentiment; and this he repeated in answer to farther remonstrances from the speaker, who called on the chancellor of the exchequer, and the house generally, to support him in his authority. As Brougham would not explain till Canning had retracted, Mr. Banks moved that both members be taken into custody by the serjeant-at-arms: at last, sir Robert Wilson ingeniously extricated all parties by the suggestion of an hypothetical and mutual explanation; Mr. Banks withdrew his motion; and the right honorable and learned gentlemen declared they would discard the subject from their minds.

On the twenty-first of May, sir James Mackintosh

renewed his praiseworthy efforts to reform our criminal code, in a series of resolutions; the first of which went to take away the punishment of death in cases of larceny committed in shops and dwelling-houses, and on navigable rivers. Though these were resisted and negatived by the house, four bills were afterwards brought in by Mr. Peel on the same subject; which fell short indeed of the reforms contemplated by sir James, but still were important steps in a rational reform of our criminal law: by them government was enabled to employ male convicts in hard labor; and judges were relieved from the obligation of passing sentence of death on certain malefactors, except in case of murder. On the twenty-seventh, Mr. Lennard obtained leave to bring in a bill, abolishing the old and barbarous law, which sentenced the corpse of one guilty of *felo-de-se* to be buried at two cross-roads, with a stake driven through it; leaving the burial to be performed in private, without the ceremonies of our church.

On the second of June, lord Archibald Hamilton brought under consideration the state of representation in Scotch counties; particularly inviting the attention of Mr. Canning to this important question, as one with which he had not yet grappled; and as perfectly different in its nature from that of any question about reform in England, where representation was founded on property and population: neither the one nor the other was necessarily its basis in Scotland; for in the counties it was not founded on property, and in the burghs it was not founded on population. 'In England,' said his lordship, 'the object of all laws on this subject, was to correct abuses which had crept in, and to enforce the rights of electors; but he would show that the defects of the system in Scotland did not rest in the abuses, but in the very nature of the law: for this assertion he had the authority of lord chancellor Thurlow, who declared, that the evil was fundamental, and such as the legislature alone could remedy; for the right of election might rest intirely in the hands of those who had no earthly stake in the country.' After

CHAP.
LXII.
1823.

a very able exposition of the case, he proposed five resolutions, the latter of which went to pledge the house to take this subject into its serious consideration during the next session, with a view to effect some extension of the number of votes, and to establish some connexion between the elective franchise and the landed property of the country: the motion was ably seconded by Mr. Maxwell, and supported by sir George Clerk, Mr. Kennedy, sir James Mackintosh, lord Milton, and others; but being opposed by lord Binning and the lord advocate,² was negatived without a division, after the previous question had been carried by 152 against 117 voices.

The noble mover failed in securing the approbation of Mr. Canning; since that gentleman, with all his liberality on other subjects, would never listen to any arguments which might open the door to parliamentary reform: on this question, he always conceded what was undeniable in fact, and clear to unprejudiced minds; never, like many of his colleagues, with over-ardent zeal putting falsehood and truth on a level, without conscience or discrimination; but taking his stand on some specious and tenable objection: thus, instead of asserting that the system was perfect and pure, he granted that many evils complained of actually existed; yet he asserted, that it worked well, and its evils were far less than those which would result from the application of a remedy. If Great Britain could have been always sure of possessing an enlightened minister at its helm, his reasons would have held good: indeed, this principle might be carried out to much greater extent; for a despotism would be the best of governments, if it were always possible to secure the best of men for the despot. In the mean time, the great question of parliamentary reform was progressive, and the very obstinacy of Mr. Canning inclined many to favor it; since no public man ever existed, in whose character flaws were more diligently scanned, or exag-

² An officer, who for a great length of time seemed as if he was appointed to be the defender of all abuses, and to take a part exactly opposite to that assigned to the Roman consul; in short, to see — *Nē quid 'commodi' caperet respublica.*

gerated by political enmity; and multitudes, blind to his good qualities, were taught to believe that 'the system worked well' for the gratification of his rapacity and ambition.

CHAP.
LXII.

1823.

On the sixth of June, Mr. Brogden brought up the report of a bill, by which the sum of £150,000 was to be advanced by government, toward the construction of New London-bridge: to Mr. Hume's objection against this advance in the shape of a gift, it was satisfactorily alleged by alderman Wood, that the work was one of great national utility, and not intended exclusively for the benefit of the city; that the money was to be paid by instalments, extending over a term of seven years; and that the corporation were ready to contribute all in their power on this occasion; to give up nearly £200,000 that was in their hands, and to raise £400,000 more on mortgage: Mr. Ricardo agreed with his friend Mr. Hume; but the report was received, and the resolution for the proposed advance carried. On the ninth, Mr. Creevey called attention to a very heavy grievance, under which the Leeward Islands labored, by what was called the four and half per cent. duty: having read petitions from five of these islands, appealing to the liberality and justice of parliament, and setting forth their present calamitous circumstances, with their utter inability to bear such a tax, on account of the great depreciation of West Indian produce, he proposed the abolition of an impost, on which were saddled many pensions granted to our aristocratic families: he thought it hard on these islands, that they should be burdened with the maintenance of so many ladies and gentlemen of condition in England: he was the last man to urge any interference with private arrangements of the royal family; but the king had given pensions to two of his sisters at the expense of the unfortunate Leeward Islands: he meant nothing offensive; but he could not understand on what principle such annuities had been granted; or why these islands were singled out for the honor of contributing to the subsistence of the duke of Gloucester and the prince of Hesse Homburg: then came five pensions of

CHAP.
LXII.
1823.

£500 each to the Misses Fitzclarence from the same source: there were also gentlemen high in office—one whom he saw in his place, and one whom he did not see—who condescendingly allowed the Leeward Islands to make provision for their families;—an honor, of which they were by no means desirous, and a principle to which he decidedly objected: right honorable gentlemen could not say they were ignorant of the colonies; for their own acts proved their knowledge of the fact: they could support the colonies, and urge their distress, willingly enough in a particular way: they could tax East India sugar, and the consumer of West India sugar in England; but it never occurred to them, to abate that tax out of which their own pensions were derived. The object of the resolutions with which Mr. Creevey concluded, was to obtain a pledge from the house, to remove this grievance from the Leeward Islands, and this scandal from the mother country. He was answered by Mr. Canning, who had been designated in his speech; and who objected to the motion, as affecting the right of the crown to this particular branch of revenue, and also its right of appropriating the same in any manner deemed suitable by his majesty's government: though he acknowledged the great distress under which the Leeward Islands were then suffering, and wished that the fund could be so modified as to meet the circumstances of that distress; yet he deprecated every notion of placing it at the arbitrary disposal of parliament, under whose sanction it had so long existed in its present state: indeed, he argued, no vote of that house existed to support the honorable gentleman's argument; Mr. Burke himself, in his most sanguine efforts to effect a financial reform, had never entertained a doubt respecting the subject of this fund; but left it, as he found it, at the disposal of the crown. With respect to his own case, alluded to by the mover of this question, he observed; 'it was true, that many years ago he had held an office; on retiring from which, by uniform practice sanctioned by law, he became intitled to a pension of £1200 per annum; but he waived his claim

CHAP.
LXII.
1823.

to that annuity; and it was true, that such right was afterwards commuted for a pension of half the amount, for a person who had direct claims on him for protection; he remembered also, with satisfaction, that this choice was thought at the time a considerable sacrifice on his part: it was certainly open to parliament to deliberate on particular instances in the disposal of this fund; and he would not complain of the manner in which the honorable gentleman had exerted his right in the present instance; yet he well knew that he (Mr. Canning) could, if he chose, have taunted him with the names of persons in the same situation, and connected with parties whom the honorable gentleman highly respected: that mode however was too invidious to follow: the house had a right to examine into supposed abuses as to the application of this, as well as any other branch of the revenue; but he must say, the honorable gentleman did not seem to have made out any case which called for censure.' The house agreed with Mr. Canning; and, rejecting Mr. Creevey's resolutions by a majority of 103 to 57 voices, gave an accelerated velocity to the cause of *parliamentary reform*.

Nor did this increased velocity seem likely to be retarded when the expenses of the late coronation came before the commons; and called forth many severe animadversions from Mr. Hume, not only on the length of time which had elapsed before they were laid on the table, but on the enormous extent to which they ran. The chancellor of the exchequer had promised that they should not exceed £100,000; but they now turned out to be £238,000; the surplus having been taken from the French indemnities! Estimates so totally at variance with the expenses could only be characterised as a folly and a farce: some of the items of this sum were especially noticed; for instance, the sum of £111,000 to decorate Westminster-abbey and hall; £27,700 paid to the master of his majesty's robes, on account of those habiliments; and £3000 granted to sir George Naylor toward the expense of publishing an account of the ceremony. Of what

CHAP.
LXII.

1823.

service, said Mr. Hume, was it to attempt the relief of public burdens, by cutting down inferior clerks, and inflicting distress on other individuals, when such sums as these were expended for such purposes? He also reproached the ministry with bad faith, who had called for so small a sum as had been originally mentioned, and afterwards proposed a vote to the amount of £238,000; well knowing, that if the latter sum had been originally asked for, it would not have been granted: he also accused the chancellor of the exchequer and his colleagues of violating public faith, by taking money to which they had no right; subtracting £138,000 from the sum paid by France for indemnities to this country, and which ought to have been appropriated to the ways and means: the honorable gentleman thought the house would fail in its duty to the public, if it did not instantly call for an examination into the profligate extravagance of this job; and he concluded with proposing a committee for such purpose; but more especially to inquire, by what authority the sum of £138,000 had been applied to the coronation expenses without previous sanction from the house.

On Mr. Hume's amendment being put, the chancellor of the exchequer rose; and, under pretence of being taken by surprise, made a miserable reply: however, it satisfied his audience, and the amendment was negatived by a majority of 110 to 65. The house next went into committee; and the sum of £160,000 was proposed toward defraying the civil contingencies of 1823: this gave Mr. Hume an opportunity of bringing forward many other items in the extravagant system of expenditure now pursued; particularly, the sum of £5327 for furniture in the royal yacht, £504 for plate in the Rolls-chapel, and £1329 for the standards of the three regiments of foot guards: he also drew attention to charges made on account of foreign ambassadors; though, in a diplomatic point of view, this country was worse served than any other in Europe; every thing being done at the head-quarters of our allies; while our government was kept in such

ignorance, that its envoys might be as well retained at home. The honorable member, in the absence of returns, which the secretary for foreign affairs refused to produce, referred to the comparative statement of expenses for the diplomatic services of 1792 and 1820:—

| | 1792. | 1820. |
|---|----------|----------|
| Total amount of salaries and annual allowances | £83,463 | £149,778 |
| Outfit and equipage | 8000 | 13,191 |
| Extraordinary and incidental expenses, charges, &c. | 5,985 | 35,092 |
| Pensions to retired ministers | 11,486 | 54,204 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | £101,734 | 252,265 |
| | | 101,734 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | £150,531 |

‘ And this difference,’ said Mr. Hume, ‘ exists, although Poland and Brussels, the Hans Towns, Genoa, Cologne, Hesse Cassel, and Venice form each an item in the account of 1792, and not in that of 1820; as they have been expunged from the list of independent states; while the only additional countries included in that of 1820 are Wurtemberg and Brazil, with £2000 for Persia.’ After commenting on the distinction between that part of the civil list appropriated to special purposes of government, and the other part applicable to the expenses of the king’s household; and contending, on the authority of Mr. Fox and sir Fletcher Norton, that the former was under the control of parliament,—the honorable gentleman concluded by moving for a reduction of £52,799 from the present vote of £160,090: Mr. Canning, however, was ready to defend this expenditure; the house was satisfied; and Mr. Hume’s amendment was rejected by seventy votes against sixteen.

As our attention has been called to so many cases of ministerial profusion, several of which arose from a desire to indulge his majesty’s love of splendor, justice requires that we should notice a noble instance of

Munifi-
cence of
George IV.

CHAP.
LXII.
—
1823.

royal munificence, calculated, not only to benefit the present age, but to extend its advantages to remote generations. By a letter addressed to lord Liverpool, in January, the king signified his intention of presenting to the British nation that valuable library which had been collected by his father, for the purpose (according to his own expressions) of 'advancing the literature of his country, while he paid a just tribute to the memory of a parent, whose life was adorned with every public and private virtue.' This letter, together with certain resolutions of the trustees of the British Museum on the subject, having been laid before the commons, was referred to a select committee; which, on the sixteenth of April, made its report. After noticing the great value and extent of the library, consisting of more than 65,000 volumes, besides a numerous collection of geographical and topographical works; the committee expressed an opinion, that the greatest benefit would accrue to the public, if his majesty's magnificent donation were placed under care of the trustees of the British Museum; and if a building were raised for its reception, forming part of a general design for an edifice calculated to contain the several collections of that institution: the committee, in conclusion, recommended that successive grants should be made to effect the purposes above specified; in consequence of which, the house voted a sum of £40,000 to commence the work; and the foundation of the new structure, on a plan prepared by Mr. Smirke, and approved by the lords of the treasury, was laid this year. The noble room intended for the royal library, was completed in 1827, and in the following summer received this valuable collection; a splendid monument of the good taste and patriotic spirit of George IV.

During the present session, a very beneficial act was passed for the commutation of tithes in Ireland; also one to remedy the imperfection of an act passed in 1800, for enabling the king and his successors to dispose of private property, but which had been so worded as to leave them without the power to dispose of lands

belonging to them before their accession. In the house of commons, Mr. John Williams brought forward the first of those motions respecting the court of chancery, directly inculcating the conduct of its head officer: it was keenly debated for two nights, and then negatived by 174 votes against 89. A motion, made by lord Lansdowne, for the second reading of the dissenters' marriage bill, which might enable them to have the marriage ceremony performed in their own chapels, was warmly supported by lords Ellenborough, Calthorpe, and Liverpool; but though the principle of the bill was supported by the archbishop of Canterbury it was vehemently opposed by the lord chancellor, as containing principles inconsistent with the predominancy of the established church, and was thrown out by a majority of twenty-seven against twenty-one: subsequent proceedings in parliament were not marked by any character of peculiar importance; except the appointment of a deputy speaker in the house of lords, for the purpose of enabling their lordships to dispatch more business in the matter of appeals: lord Gifford obtained this high and responsible office, in which he gave much satisfaction, and enabled the lord chancellor to devote a greater portion of his time to the duties of his own court. It may also be observed that an act was passed, though with a strong protest from the duke of Newcastle and lord Abingdon, enabling the duke of Norfolk, though a Romanist, to execute his high office of earl marshal, on taking the oath of allegiance, without that of supremacy, or the declaration against transubstantiation; and the session, which was on the whole very laborious, but more harmonious than any other since the peace, was closed by commission on the nineteenth of July.

Throughout the remainder of the year, our internal prosperity appeared to advance, and public confidence in government increased: this feeling was mainly attributable to an altered tone in the administration, which was ascribed to the ascendancy of Mr. Canning over the cabinet; while the general popularity of that minister was increased by the whole tenor of his

CHAP.
LXII.

1823.

State of the
country.

CHAP.
LXII.

1823.

measures. One of the most decided of these, and most advantageous to Great Britain, was the appointment of British consuls to the chief commercial places in the revolted colonies of Spain, as soon as the mother country fell again under the despotism of its tyrannical monarch; and this virtual recognition of South American independence was accompanied by a spirited declaration to the perfidious cabinet of M. Villele; which was plainly told, that although Great Britain, faithful to her principles of neutrality, would not oppose the attempts of Spain to recover her colonies, the interference of any third power would be met by force. Though British feelings, irritated as they were by the treachery of France and the arrogance of its holy allies, had been suppressed by the consideration, that war would grievously interrupt public industry and improvement, yet our minister was anxious to make it known, that there was a limit to forbearance; and though the ultimate object of this country was the peace of Europe, yet it was not to be supposed that she either feared or was unprepared for war: these sentiments he expressed in one of his happiest effusions, when returning thanks for the freedom of the borough of Plymouth, conferred on him during a visit to that grand receptacle of the British navy, which afforded him so beautiful and appropriate an illustration of his subject. 'Our present repose,' he observed, 'is no more a proof of our inability to act, than the state of inertness and inactivity, in which I have seen those mighty masses that float in the waters above your town, is a proof that they are devoid of strength, and incapable of being fitted for action: you well know, gentlemen, how soon one of those stupendous masses, now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness, how soon, on any call of patriotism or necessity, it would assume the likeness of an animated thing, instinct with life and motion; how soon it would ruffle, as it were, its swelling plumage; how quickly it would put forth all its beauty and bravery, collect its scattered elements of strength, and awake its dormant thunder. As is one of these magnificent

machines, when springing from inaction into a display of its might, such is England herself, while, apparently passive and motionless, she silently concentrates the power to be put forth on an adequate occasion: but God forbid that that occasion should arise! After a war sustained for nearly a quarter of a century, sometimes single-handed, and with all Europe arrayed at times against her, or at her side, England needs a period of tranquillity, and may enjoy it without fear of misconstruction: long may we be enabled, gentlemen, to improve the blessings of our present situation; to cultivate the arts of peace; to give to commerce, now reviving, greater extension, with new spheres of employment; and to confirm the prosperity now generally diffused throughout this island.'

The year 1824 shone still more auspiciously than its predecessor on our commerce and manufactures; which appeared to receive a new impulse from the more enlarged and secure opening of the South American market: even agriculture felt the influence of this amelioration; and in all other branches of industry prices began to rise; the complaints of landowners were faint or unheard; and the produce of our revenue exceeded the most sanguine expectations. This revival of prosperity, with an abundance of capital accumulated in the late war, but shut up during a long stagnancy of the markets, gave a dangerous activity to enterprise, and generated that spirit of hasty speculation, which appeared in the memorable era of joint-stock schemes: enormous sums of money were now expended in digging for gold in South America; and such was the rage for speculation, that shares even of unexplored mines rose twelve hundred per cent.; soon alas! to fall below their original cost: the disastrous consequences, however, of this extraordinary mania were as yet neither felt nor foreseen; and when parliament met on the third of February, congratulations expressed by the commissioners, in the name of his majesty, on the prosperous state of the country, were echoed back in the addresses of both houses. So generally

CHAP.
LXII.
1824.

Recogni-
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South
American
independ-
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popular and unexceptionable had been the measures of government, that opposition found little to attack in our internal policy; the continued occupation of Spain therefore by French troops, and the expediency of completely recognising her revolted colonies, formed, for a time, the chief objects of discussion. Lord Lansdowne, deploring the fate of the peninsula, regretted that ministers had not remonstrated with more energy; and thought that a greater advance should have been made toward our complete recognition of South American independence. Mr. Brougham, in the lower house, attacked the general tyranny and particular cruelties of the Austrians in one peninsula, and of Ferdinand in the other, with a strong battery of invective; and, in allusion to the impotent efforts made by this country to ward off the blow from the constitutionalists, observed, 'that England was bound over in recognisances of £800,000,000 to keep the peace.' Our foreign policy regarding Spain was subsequently discussed on motions made by lord John Russell and lord Nugent; but it was vindicated by Mr. Canning, who showed that the conduct of Great Britain had been regulated by a due regard for her own interests and dignity, as well as by an honorable attention to the just principles of international law; and that while we preserved peace, so necessary under present circumstances, we had, by bold and open remonstrances, paralysed schemes which the holy allies had formed, for extending their system of interference from the home government of Spain to the internal condition of her colonies. These explanations were so generally satisfactory, that, except in the case of lord Lansdowne's motion, the question was not pressed to a division: the propriety of admitting the South American colonies into the rank of independent powers, was, in fact, only a consideration of time; and before the middle of this year, our cabinet determined on the recognition of Mexico, Columbia, and Buenos Ayres; with which states treaties of amity and commerce were concluded.

Thus, the power so long exercised with injustice

and partiality by Spain over her colonies vanished for ever: whatever forms the political relations of these states with the mother country may assume, their independence became, at all events, established. 'But,' as professor Heeren rightly observes, 'they have their most dangerous enemy in themselves. Who, indeed, would ensure to them solidity and permanence? for, though we see republican institutions springing up almost every where in this continent, how can such subsist, even in the most favorable event, among nations where color determines caste, and military commanders prescribe laws? and how can the universally-proclaimed freedom of the press be compatible with their hierarchy?'³ The learned writer might have gone a step farther, and asked, how any political liberty can subsist with that ambitious hierarchy, alienated as it is from national and domestic ties, or with that exclusive and intolerant support of the Roman church, which these states have interwoven in the very frame-work of their constitutions? What party, when freedom was introduced into Spain and Italy, was so much on the alert to oppose it, as the popish clergy? They exerted every nerve to prevail on Austria and France to attack the new institutions: in both countries, the common soldiers and the people, under the dominion of the priests, refused to fight; and the invaders overran them in a single campaign, almost without the necessity of striking a blow.

From the statement of the chancellor of the exchequer, it appeared that the public revenue continued to improve: notwithstanding the remission of taxes, it had last year produced £57,672,999; leaving a clear balance of £1,710,985 over the expenditure, beside the established sinking fund of five millions. A part of this surplus he proposed to employ in granting half a million for the erection of new churches; of £300,000 for the gradual renovation and improvement of Windsor-castle, that majestic seat of British monarchs; also of £60,000 for the purchase of the Angerstein pictures, in furtherance of a laudable design to establish a

Financial
statements.

³ Vol. ii. p. 381.

CHAP. national gallery for the fine arts. These acts of libe-
LXII. rality were rendered more easy by the unexpected
1824. repayment of £2,500,000 by Austria, for loans ad-
vanced by our government during the late war: it
was, in fact, a small dividend on the debt due to this
country; but, though it did not satisfy the expecta-
tions of some gentlemen in the house, it was rightly
characterised by Mr. Canning as 'a god-send,' and
was dispersed accordingly.

In his financial calculations for the present year, Mr. Robinson anticipated a continued surplus; on the strength of which, he proposed a farther repeal of taxes to the amount of more than a million; and as an auxiliary measure, he suggested the discontinuance of certain bounties on fisheries and manufactures, which were no longer necessary: an extension also of the scheme for reducing the interest on our national debt was a prominent feature in his arrangement: thus, he proposed to convert the old four per cent. stock, amounting to £75,000,000, into a new fund, bearing interest at three and a half per cent.; giving the holders of course the option of being paid off at par, or of acceding to the new plan; which was more profitable to the country than that of last year, since no bonus was given or required; and therefore the nominal amount of the debt was not increased. This arrangement, by which an annual saving of £375,000 was effected, met with the approbation of parliament, and was carried into execution with great facility.

Steps were taken this session toward a more unrestrained system of trade: one important measure consisted in a repeal of what were still left of protecting duties between Ireland and Great Britain; and this at the demand of the Irish themselves, taught by experience how unavailing those fiscal barriers had been to improve their trade. Enactments also were passed, tending to withdraw British manufacturers from the protection of laws which prohibited the importation of foreign silks into this realm: the plan adopted was, to lower the import duties on raw and thrown silk, to repeal bounties on the exportation of

this manufacture, and to substitute a duty of thirty per cent. on foreign silks, instead of prohibiting their importation. The first part of this plan was generally approved; the second was received with indifference; but the third met with great opposition from the trade; and counsel were heard against it at the bar of the house. The principles on which ministers proceeded were ably expounded by Mr. Huskisson, who illustrated the importance of liberating commerce from all unnecessary restrictions, by tracing the progress of the cotton trade: he asked whether, if restrictions had not been removed from that manufacture, Great Britain could ever have made the gigantic exertions which distinguished her in the last war? ‘Does not,’ he said, ‘the number of persons employed in it, to the amount of 1,200,000, whose wants are supplied in return for their labor, afford more real encouragement to agriculture, than any regulations made to force up artificial prices? It is to the growth of wealth, and the progress of industry, that this country must look, both for relief from present burdens, and for the means of making fresh exertions whenever they may be demanded: but it is not in the power of any artificial measures to give that real relief to agriculture, or to any other kind of occupation, which can only flow from increasing activity, and constant industry among the people: the most remarkable feature in the history of the cotton manufacture is the impetus which it has given to invention and discovery, and the ingenuity which it has called into action: the effect of this has been to produce the article at the lowest possible rate; and we find, that a greater number of persons have been employed to direct the machinery, in proportion as the manufacturer has had the prospect of fresh resources. But what is the situation of the silk trade under the prohibitory system, which some consider its greatest advantage? Why, the monopoly has produced, what it is always sure to produce, a total indifference to improvement: that useful zeal, which gives life to industry, which fosters ingenuity, and which in manufacturing concerns

CHAP.
LXII.

1824.

promotes a desire to produce the article in its most economical form, has been completely extinguished; and in this branch we are left far behind our neighbors: if the same system had been continued with respect to the cotton manufacture, it would have been at this moment as subordinate in extent to the wool-len, as it is junior to it in its introduction into this country.'

Mr. Huskisson proceeded to notice the unpleasant effects of prohibitory duties, in the power they give to the commonest ruffian in the street of snatching from a person of any rank an article suspected to be of foreign manufacture: he pointed out their injurious effects in the promotion of smuggling, and in the breaches of the law to which they led so many persons: he also showed, from the confession of those who petitioned against the proposed regulations, that a duty of thirty per cent. would be quite sufficient to protect our own manufactures: indeed, a deputation from Manchester had declared, that, under such a duty, they could meet the French in any country of the world. 'I am perfectly aware,' he observed, 'that the proposed alteration must affect particular interests; but in every change there will be partial interests that must suffer for a time; and all that parliament can do, all indeed that is its duty to do, is to deal with them as tenderly as possible: there are also persons not remiss in opposing this measure, who have created a strong feeling out of doors against it; I mean all those, who, under the prohibitory system, have benefited by smuggling: they are naturally afraid that their trade will suffer; and that if there be no prohibition, no lady will fancy a French article when she can get an English one.'

Mr. Baring, one of the enlightened advocates of free trade, being probably influenced by the prejudices of his constituents at Taunton, resisted this measure as a hazardous experiment: the French, he urged, had an advantage over us in silk, in machinery, and in cheapness of labor; yet the mode taken by the chancellor of the exchequer to oppose such advantages,

was to open the English market to French silks. After dilating on these topics, he was answered by Mr. Wallace, who contended, that a high duty on the raw material was the principal reason why we had been inferior to others in this manufacture: but we now possessed great advantages in our Indian silk; and if the trade were thrown open, we might even supply French markets with that article: the silk of India was cheaper than that of Italy; and if there were no duty on it, and no prohibition, England would be the mart for the raw material, as well as for the manufacture: if it were true, that we had reared a considerable trade under a large duty; why should we despair of extending it when that duty was abolished? Notwithstanding the opposition of partial interests, this ministerial scheme met with general support from both sides of the house, and was carried without difficulty. After various fluctuations, occasioned chiefly by the peculiar nature of the times; and after innumerable petitions, signed by multitudes in the various districts of the silk manufacture, predicting utter extirpation to the trade, and ruin to all engaged in it; we have the satisfaction of seeing the admirable effects resulting from a firm resistance made against ignorant and senseless clamor: the British silk trade is increased tenfold since those predictions were uttered; and the articles manufactured, though lower in price, are equal in beauty to the once coveted productions of the French or Indian loom. Among other important measures of relaxation carried by ministers, was the immediate removal of all unequal restrictions in the import and export trade of wool, with a gradual approach to the same system in linen manufactures.

The renewal of the alien bill was resisted with unusual energy, especially by Mr. Hobhouse and sir James Mackintosh: the act indeed was carried; but the mildness with which it was put into operation, doubtless proceeded, in a great degree, from the rigid scrutiny to which it was subjected by these and other spirited individuals: the abuses of the church in Ireland, and

CHAP.
LXII.

1824.

State of
Ireland.

of the court of chancery in England;⁴ led to vehement discussions, but to no legislative enactment.

Much attention was given to the state of the sister island in both houses; each of which appointed a committee of inquiry into its general condition. The close of this year, however, saw the establishment of a political engine of extraordinary power, in the Catholic Association; the energies of which were subsequently wielded with so much effect by Mr. O'Connell, a barrister of eminence, who soon became the acknowledged leader of the disaffected party, and encouraged them to effect by union and agitation, what had been denied to remonstrances and entreaties: probably, at first, neither the government, nor the association itself, was aware of the extent to which its formidable powers could be carried: but it soon extended its correspondence, and appointed regular agents for every Roman catholic parish in the kingdom; when, having ascertained the influence which it possessed over a great majority of the Irish people, it proceeded to levy a large revenue under the denomination of a catholic rent, and to usurp the functions both of legislative and executive authority. During the year now described three men, celebrated in the annals of their country departed this life; lord Keith, the earl St. Vincent, and lord Erskine; the latter of whom, it is grievous to say, sullied the brightness of his high reputation, by the eccentricities of his latter days.

¹ 'Mr. Williams,' says lord Eldon, 'made his attack last night, as savage as the Dey of Algiers, with whom we are gone to war.'—Life, vol. ii. p. 488.

CHAPTER LXIII.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1824.

Parliamentary discussions—State of the colonies—Affairs of Spain and Portugal—Death of Louis XVIII.—East Indian affairs under lord Amherst's presidency—Case of Mr. Buckingham—Burmese war—Peace concluded on terms favorable to the British government—Commercial treaty with the court of Ava—The rajah of Bhurtpoor reinstated by lord Combermere—Arrival of lord William Bentinck as governor-general.

AN instance of apparent severity and injustice was brought before the commons by Mr. Brougham, and occasioned much discussion both within and without the house. During the preceding session, the agitation of measures in behalf of our negro population in the colonies was followed by some lamentable consequences, which seemed to result from the rash enthusiasm of the advocates for an immediate abolition of slavery: not aware of the difficulties with which the British government had to contend, and not content to await the influence of time and instruction in preparing the slave population to profit by an improved condition, these well-meaning, but inconsiderate persons, had pressed on parliament the consideration of a subject which could scarcely be discussed without danger; and Mr. Buxton, on the fifteenth of May, 1823, after a speech very inflammatory in its tendency, moved, that a state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution as well as the christian religion, and ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British colonies. Mr. Canning, in deprecating the agitation of this question, explained the measures in progress

Parliamentary
discussions.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1824.

for bettering the condition of slaves, and obtained, for a time, the acquiescence of the house in the prudence of government: but the dreaded mischief had been done; the ignorant negroes had been led to believe that their freedom, granted by parliament, was withheld by the colonial assemblies; which delusion caused not only an insurrection in Demerara, but irritation, violence, and disorder throughout all the other colonies. The assemblies, it is true, rejected every recommendation for improving the condition of slaves, and were at open war, especially in the chief island, Jamaica, with the local government; but it must at the same time be confessed, that a party of ignorant and fanatical missionaries excited the negro population so as to alarm the fears and inflame the passions of the colonists. In this state of general feeling, a missionary, named Smith, was tried by martial law on a charge of stimulating the negroes to revolt in Demerara; being guilty, at least, of concealing a knowledge of their intended rising from the colonial authorities: this man was condemned to death; but, his case being sent to England for the consideration of the privy council, he died in prison before a pardon, which was extended to him, could arrive. While the colonists, however, were indignant at this remission of the sentence, and at the little anxiety shown, as they thought, by government for their lives and property, the abolition party, joined by the regular opposition in parliament, loudly denounced the court-martial held on Smith as illegal, and his sentence as unjust: Mr. Brougham's motion to this effect was supported by 146 votes; and it was with great difficulty that ministers, assisted by Mr. Canning's eloquent sophistry, could procure a small majority to acquit his judges: the plans of government, however, for ameliorating the condition of the slaves, which generally combined benevolence with caution, strongly recommended themselves to all rational advocates of freedom: these, as stated by lord Bathurst and Mr. Canning, consisted chiefly in abolishing the habitual use of the lash, and its application to females; in regulating the punishment of refractory slaves; in

preventing the separate sale of husband, wife, and children; in protecting the property of slaves, admitting their evidence, and facilitating their manumission; also in providing for them religious instruction, and a regular ecclesiastical establishment, with two bishops at its head, one presiding over Jamaica, and the other over the Leeward Islands.

While our settlements at the Cape of Good Hope were extending themselves toward the interior of the country, and increasing in commercial prosperity, the quiet of the colony was disturbed by the unpopularity of its governor, lord Charles Somerset. Though the vexations complained of were exaggerated, and the complaints sometimes unreasonable, yet enough remained to show that his lordship was deficient in that candor and liberality of spirit, which will prevent a public officer from carrying feelings of resentment and partiality into the affairs of administration: his high birth and connexions, however, secured him from animadversions in the proper quarter. Among all the constituents of good government no one is more admirable than an aristocracy founded upon birth: most unwisely therefore does a ministry act, which by screening the faults of any member in this body, contributes to bring odium upon the whole. Another part of the great African continent was at this time a scene of more tragical events; for the administrators of the small British settlements on the Gold Coast, having imprudently taken part in the quarrels of the natives, and violated the terms of a treaty concluded some years before with the powerful king of the Ashantees, were attacked by a large army of warlike and well-appointed troops under the command of that monarch. Sir Charles Macarthy, governor of Sierra Leone, having advanced against them with a few Europeans, aided by some thousands of barbarian allies, much inferior both in courage and means to his antagonists, was defeated with a dreadful carnage, especially of his British followers, and the loss of his own life: this lamentable catastrophe excited alarm for the safety of our principal settlements at Cape

State of the
colonies.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1824.

Coast Castle; but the *Thetis* frigate having opportunely arrived with a few troops, and the garrison being strengthened by a small body of auxiliaries from Acra, the enemy were repulsed, and compelled to raise the siege which they had laid to the fort: colonel Sutherland afterwards overthrew them in several other engagements; and these defeats, together with famine and disease, put an end to their desultory hostilities.

Our North American colonies were now in the enjoyment of great commercial and agricultural prosperity; which, however, in the case of Lower Canada, began to be interrupted by dissensions not unlikely to produce important consequences. On the fourth of March, the house of assembly voted an address to the king, in which they represented very strongly, that as the members of the church of England constituted only a minority of the population, the clergy of the church of Scotland, as well as the ministers of dissenters, had an equitable claim to participate in the revenues set apart for religious instruction. Serious disputes also had arisen between the house of assembly on the one hand, and the legislative council, with the governor at its head, on the other: part of the revenue of this province was raised under the authority of the British parliament, and appropriated to the civil expenses; while another portion of it had been appropriated by acts of the provincial parliament: the house of assembly persevered in claiming an unlimited right to dispose of the whole; in which pretension it was resisted by the governor and legislative council: the consequence was, that the supplies were refused, and the different branches of legislature separated in very bad humor with each other. Amid the many schemes of speculation by joint-stock companies, which the apparent prosperity of the nation, and the abundance of unemployed capital, brought out this year, was one called the Canada company, which had the approbation of our colonial department, and the sanction of a royal charter: lands were to be granted by the crown, at a fixed price, to this association, which

was to employ its funds in establishing and assisting settlers: whether the scheme might answer to the speculators or not, there seemed no reason to doubt but that the colony would benefit by the diffusion of a large capital among its inhabitants, as well as by the employment of skilful and experienced men.

From the continent of Australia the most pleasing prospects continued to be unfolded: the British settlements in New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land prospered, because the number of free laborers increased, and the stream of emigration began to set toward that quarter: within a few years, the population had more than doubled itself; and important returning cargoes, especially of wool, began to remunerate the mother country for its expenditure; while a brisk trade was thence carried on with India and the remotest regions of the world: the chain of mountains also in the rear had been surmounted, and roads over them constructed; spacious and fertile plains, intersected with rivers, invited agriculturists; and the town of Bathurst had been made a starting point for explorers of the interior. On the Society Islands christianity was victorious; the Sandwich Isles, so shamefully treated afterwards by French aggression, under Louis Philippe, and Guizot,¹ resembled a British colony; and the New Zealanders, carrying on an increasing traffic with New South Wales, began to eat potatoes instead of human flesh. 'All these things,' says Heeren, 'are elements of a new order of things; elements of one grand, universal, political system, growing out of the narrow colonial system of Europe.'²

While the energies of Spain were chained down by absolute power, events of an extraordinary nature occurred in Portugal: the constitutional government in that country had scarcely been established, before it was overturned by the troops under Don Miguel; but now that worthy scion of a degenerate stock made

European
politics.

¹ When such men sacrifice the principles of honor, justice, and humanity, to curry favor with the basest portion of the people, and the vilest part of the press, it is enough to make us doubt the very existence of public virtue.

² Vol. ii. p. 399.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1824.

an attempt to dethrone his own parent. In May this year, the king's palace at Lisbon was surrounded by the troops in garrison; his majesty's servants were denied access to his person; and his ministers were even thrown into prison: the diplomatic body, including the pope's nuncio, then interfered, and procured some degree of liberty to the king; but this was thought so imperfect and insecure, that, following the advice of the French ambassador, his majesty took refuge on board a British ship of war in the Tagus; and was thus enabled to assert his dignity, and re-establish his authority. With respect to the author of these outrages on regal and parental authority, his confiding father considered him as having been misled by evil counsellors, and generously carried his youthful indiscretions to the account of involuntary faults: he was, however, recommended to visit foreign courts, in order to gain some experience of the world; and when the course of his peregrinations brought this accomplished traveller to that of Great Britain, he was loaded with honors and caresses; being received by the dominant political party in this country, as a mirror for princes, the very representative of all *preux chevaliers*: after such a reception, he was dismissed to improve the Braganza breed by marrying his own niece,³ with the hearty benedictions of British courtiers.

On the sixteenth of August, died Louis XVIII., after a long and painful illness borne with much patience and christian resignation; for this monarch was firm in his religious principles, though by no means a bigot; as a proof of which it is asserted that no ecclesiastic attended the procession at his funeral: his departure was evidently calculated to renew in France scenes similar to those which occurred in England after the decease of Charles II.; for the brother of Louis was as great a bigot in religion as the brother of Charles; and the bigotry of both impelled them to

³ Donna Maria da Gloria, however, escaped this distinguished honor of marrying her uncle; and, like our own lamented princess Charlotte, showed a will of her own in these matters.

acts of the most tyrannical complexion: the chief obstacle, during the late reign, to the completion of the French constitution, lay in what was termed the occult government, organised and directed by the presumptive heir to the throne, and his partisans; promoted by priests and jesuits, grasping at wealth and spiritual domination, perverting every stream of public justice, disturbing the harmonies of family connexions, and thus poisoning the fount of social happiness: there was scarcely a town or village in France, to which ramifications of this diabolical confederacy did not extend, or where it had not its secret committee; from among the members of which it forced government to choose the agents of authority: all men of good sentiments, as they were termed, that is, all who were slavish in politics and superstitious in religion, belonged to this class; of which, while many were sincere, more were hypocrites, who assumed a mask, in order to gratify their ambition and cupidity: the existence of such a faction, and the protection it enjoyed, exposed the good faith of the late king to suspicion, whilst it terrified the friends of the charter, and exasperated the fierce democratical party, which fortunately was not extinguished in France: they soon drove his successor from the throne.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1824.

The serious war which broke out this year in the east, between our company and the Burmese sovereign naturally recalls us to a consideration of Indian affairs since the retirement of the marquis of Hastings. The governor appointed to succeed that wise and patriotic statesman was lord Amherst; who, being chiefly known as an unsuccessful ambassador to the court of Peking, had to encounter all the evils of invidious and disadvantageous comparison. At the period of lord Hastings's departure in the beginning of 1823, our Indian territories were in a state of profound peace; and until his successor should arrive, Mr. Adam, senior member of the council, assumed the reins of government: during the short period of this gentleman's administration, the case of Mr. Buckingham occurred, which has so often brought the question of

East Indian
affairs under
lord
Amherst.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

a free press in India before the British public. That gentleman had been established some years at Calcutta, where he set up a newspaper, which obtained very extensive circulation; but this was expressly contrary to regulations of the British government in India: during the administration of lord Cornwallis, a Mr. Hickey had attempted to publish unrestrained opinions on matters of administration; and his journal had been suppressed by the noble marquis: he complained bitterly of what he considered a wanton act of tyranny; and was advised by the governor, if he thought himself aggrieved, to seek his remedy in a court of law; but as he could prove no malice or illegal exercise of authority, he well knew that he would obtain no redress, and therefore abstained from the attempt. After that period, articles were occasionally published, more perhaps from inadvertency than design, which called for censure; and some cases of this nature led to an order of lord Wellesley, that the proof sheets of newspapers should be inspected by the secretary of government; a measure, which had the decided approbation of that eminent statesman, sir John Malcolm: in allusion to it, he observed,—‘that so far as European society alone was concerned, he could not say that the existence of a free press would immediately endanger our Indian empire: he was satisfied, however, that it would excite dissensions, cherish insubordination, and produce evils a hundred times greater than any good it could effect; but its operation on the European part of the community was a very small part of this question:’⁴ accordingly, he proceeded to point out its injurious effects among a rapidly increasing portion of the population termed half-caste, sons of European fathers and native mothers, existing in an infant state of society, for the advancement of which no hopes can be entertained except through the adoption of gradual measures for their instruction: but these, in his opinion, would be frustrated by the establishment of a free press, irritating that impatience and discontent which they still feel at their condition,

⁴ Speech at a general court of proprietors, July 9, 1824.

though much has been already done to improve it: both these classes, however, as he observed, sink into comparative insignificance, when we contemplate the effects of a free press on a native population of 80,000,000. That population is separated into two great divisions, Mahometans and Hindoos: the higher ranks of the former, who, before us, were masters of almost all India, naturally remain discontented with our power: yet they bear but a small proportion to the latter, who possess this striking feature in their condition; that all their religious and civil classes are not only educated, but as prompt and skilful in intrigue as in business: from their intellectual superiority, they have always influenced and directed their more numerous and ignorant countrymen; but these instructed classes, especially the Brahmins, who have already lost consideration, wealth, and power, by our assumption of the government, fear, and justly fear, lest their degradation should be progressive: they are, at the same time, great adepts in spreading discontent, and exciting sedition or rebellion, by awakening the fears, alarming the superstition, or rousing the pride of those whom they address; and whenever the time appears favorable, they foster and keep up a spirit of hostility against us, by means of circular letters and proclamations dispersed with incredible celerity over the country, portraying the English as usurpers, of a low caste; as tyrants, who have sought India with the sole view of robbing the natives, while they subvert their usages and destroy their religion: in particular, they appeal to the native troops, earnestly exhorting them, on various occasions, to rise and murder their tyrants. Can it then be supposed that their aversion and hostility to our sway would be abated by the representations of an unlicensed press? Would it be wise or politic to put such means into the hands of those who would use it for our destruction?

Unmoved, however, by any such views as these, Mr. Buckingham followed up a long course of aggression by hazarding some severe strictures on the measures of government, particularly in its transac-

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

tions with the kingdom of Oude; and though he was aware of Mr. Adam's sentiments, and knew his resolution, he chose to try his strength with a new governor; supposing that such an one would be averse to interfere in a case where he was, or might be thought to be, personally interested. 'But,' observes sir J. Malcolm, 'he showed little discernment in his appreciation of the character of him with whom he had to deal; a man, whom no personal consideration could induce to evade a public duty. Mr. Adam, vested with the highest authority in India, was forced by this conduct to appear in contest with Mr. Buckingham, the self-created champion of British liberty; while not only the European community, but the natives also, were anxiously looking at their trial of strength. Was the issue of such a contest to be left doubtful for a moment?' Mr. Adam then, being determined to check the evil by a signal punishment, interdicted this great offender from pursuing his avocations, and sent him back to England: his banishment was followed by strict regulations of the press; and as lord Amherst, when he arrived at the seat of government, was determined to pursue rigorously the policy commenced by Mr. Adam, a breach of those regulations was met by the exile of Mr. Arnot also, who had been left by Mr. Buckingham to conduct the business of his journal. A subsequent instance of disrespect shown to authority, was punished by a withdrawal of his license from the Calcutta Journal; and for some time after this period, the public press manifested a spirit of decorum, with which no great fault could be found: an occasional letter from the chief secretary, pointing out the danger of a contrary line of conduct, restrained the editors who had diverged into it, from proceeding too far.

The increasing liberality, however, of the times induced the court of proprietors at home to relax the rigorous observance of this system: a compensation was given to Mr. Arnot; and the Indian government saw those, whom in the strict observance of duty it had felt obliged to punish, patronised and rewarded:

acts which it had adopted from the best motives were annulled in the most peremptory manner; and every thing began to indicate a wish on the part of the honorable court to comply with popular clamor, and allow the discussion of public affairs through the press to be as free in India as in England: this led to regulations, the consequences of which are very problematical; but the administration of lord Amherst was distinguished by events more generally interesting, though perhaps in the end not more important: the principal of these was the Burmese war, the causes and origin of which first demand our notice.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

The fierce and warlike nature of the Burmans had constantly urged them on to conquests; and the atrocious cruelties which they were accustomed to exercise throughout the provinces subdued by their arms, induced the natives to take refuge, in great numbers, within the British territories. 'So early,' says sir John Malcolm, 'as in the government of lord Teignmouth, a Burmese general advanced into the province of Chittagong in pursuit of three criminals, and a force was sent to repel this violation of territory; but hostilities were prevented by his waiting on the English officer who commanded it, explaining his instructions, and pleading his motives: on his retiring, the criminals were made over to him; when two were put to death by the most cruel tortures, and the other again effected his escape. Subsequently to this occurrence, a tribe, called Mughhs, in the province of Arracan, exasperated by intolerable oppression, passed over to our territories in such crowds as to cause alarm; and orders were sent to prohibit others from crossing the frontier: these commands, however, were but partially enforced; and when the miserable fugitives themselves were directed to withdraw, the reply of their leader was;—'We will not return to the Arracan country: if you choose to slaughter us here, we are ready to die; and if by force you drive us away, we will go and dwell in the jungles of the great mountains, which afford shelter to the wild beasts.''

Origin of
the Bur-
mese war.

About the close of 1798, no less a number than

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

10,000 Mughs rushed over the frontiers in a state of extreme agony and distress; and this swarm was followed by another, still greater; so that policy became enlisted on the side of humanity, in granting them at least a temporary asylum; and it was resolved to settle them on some extensive tracts of waste land in the province of Chittagong: moreover, as numbers were perishing by famine, government supplied them with food, and materials for constructing huts under the direction of captain Cox, who had been previously employed in a mission to the court of Ava. The Burmese authorities soon despatched an army of about 4000 men after these emigrants, which followed them into Chittagong; and, fortifying itself in the woods by means of a stockade, carried on for several weeks a petty warfare with our troops: to their threatening demands, however, that the runaways should be delivered up, it was replied, that no negotiation could be listened to, before the Burmese troops should retire from our borders: after this, they repelled an attack of sepoys, but subsequently retreated within their own dominions; and lieutenant Hill was then sent to the governor of Arracan, for the purpose of attempting an amicable adjustment. At this period, captain Cox arrived, and found the strangers perishing in vast numbers; as many as twenty children dying daily: with a desire therefore of terminating such calamities, he recommended our government to settle them on a desert tract between the Ramoo river and the Naaf, where they might become a useful and industrious colony, instead of being dispersed, and impelled to lead a vagabond life: this plan was followed; and the principal settlement was named, after the projector, Cox's Bazaar. The Burmese monarch now despatched an embassy to lord Wellesley; who dismissed the envoy with explanations and satisfactory assurances of the friendly disposition of our government; declaring, that the governor-general was ready at all times to deliver up acknowledged criminals, and to permit every one who desired it to return to his own country: at the same time, a proclamation was issued,

forbidding any future immigrations into the British territory.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

In 1800, however, the viceroy of Arracan peremptorily demanded an unconditional surrender of the Mughs, with menaces of invasion if refused. The governor-general would have felt himself justified in resorting to arms on the occasion of this insult; but imagining that the Arracan chief might have acted without authority, he despatched lieutenant-colonel Symes to the court of Ava, in 1802, to obtain correct information; while he sent a respectable force under lieutenant-colonel Fenwick to protect the frontier of Chittagong. Colonel Symes, on his arrival, received a general assurance of friendly sentiments from the Burmese government; and the question of the emigrants was not stirred for several years; but when captain Canning was at Ava, in 1809, he discovered that the king had long entertained a design of conquering the provinces of Chittagong and Dacca.

In the year 1811 we began to experience evil consequences from the establishment of the Mugh colony on the borders of their native country; by which means a restless desire of recovering their ancient rights and homes was kept alive in the hearts of that people. Some bold adventurers among them, under a daring chief, called Kingberring, commenced predatory attacks on the country of Arracan, which caused the Burmese troops to enter our territories, and gave rise to much complaint and recrimination. In 1813, a mission was sent to Calcutta from the viceroy of Pegu, professedly for the purpose of purchasing some sacred works of the Hindoos; but its chief, instead of buying books, spent his time in secret intrigues, hostile to our government: another officer belonging to the Burmese sovereign solicited permission to visit Delhi, under a similar pretext; but it being discovered that his real object was to raise a conspiracy among the native powers for the expulsion of the English, he was not allowed to proceed. In 1813, extensive rumors were afloat respecting active preparations for invasion; and in September, lord Minto, by a menacing proclamation,

CHAP.

LXIII.

1823-28.

endeavored to restrain the incursions of Kingberring and his desperate followers. Deputies, who had been sent from Pegu, to procure a surrender of the Mugh insurgents, delayed their departure till lord Hastings arrived, to whom they renewed their application, but without success: nor could they understand our motives; or believe that the cause of humanity made us hesitate to deliver up offenders to the tortures prepared for them: lord Hastings, however, though he refused to give up some insurgent chiefs, whom he had taken and imprisoned, endeavored by other acts to convince the Burmese government of our anxiety to suppress every species of depredation on the Arracan territory; and whenever freebooters fled for refuge to the forests, the Burmese were permitted to pursue them: but this did not satisfy the rajah of Arracan, who even went so far as to imprison an agent sent to him by Mr. Pechell, the chief magistrate at Chittagong. In the beginning of 1815, Kingberring died; and it was hoped that this event might aid our efforts in repressing the excesses of his countrymen: but as these failed, a letter was sent in April, 1816, from the rajah of Ramere, governor of the Burmese frontier provinces, peremptorily demanding a surrender of all the Mugh emigrants, with threats of immediate hostilities in case of refusal: the letter was brought by the rajah's son, who haughtily declared that he must have 'an answer, not arguments.' Mr. Pechell, having transmitted this document to Calcutta, was ordered to reply in a conciliatory but firm tone; and to discover, if possible, what was the object of the court of Ava, in reviving this question concerning the Mughs: the governor, at the same time, addressed a letter to the viceroy of Pegu, observing, that the British government could not, without violating the principles of justice, deliver up a multitude which had sought its protection, some of whom had resided thirty years within our borders; but that no prohibition existed against the voluntary return of that people to their country. The viceroy was assured, that the death of Kingberring, the captivity of his principal

associates, and the return of the Mughls to the peaceful pursuits of industry, rendered a renewal of disturbances very improbable; but that even increased vigilance should be used on our part to restrain them: 'the enlightened mind,' it was said, 'of his Burmese majesty would perceive the inutility of agitating a question, the farther discussion of which could lead to no results advantageous to either state.'

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

Soon afterwards, when Charipo, a notorious offender, had committed a daring robbery in the Burmese dominions, Mr. Pechell recommended that he should be given up, together with some of his most guilty associates, as the only method of deterring others from similar depredations: nevertheless, it was determined in council, that this could not be suffered; though a judge of circuit was sent to aid Mr. Pechell in trying the offenders; and his official opinion was, that the utmost punishment that could be inflicted on their ringleader, was an imprisonment of fourteen years.

The authorities in England had not been indifferent to these transactions, but expressed a hearty approbation of the conduct of their officers. In a letter to the supreme government, from the court of directors, dated January 6, 1815, the following passage occurred:—'We earnestly hope that you have not been driven to the necessity of delivering up Kingberring; because we observe that every Mugh who is suspected of being his partisan is put to death; and that a whole village, containing about 2500 souls, was massacred on this account, when neither men, women, nor children were spared. If, for the sake of avoiding hostilities with the king of Ava, you have been compelled to adopt such a measure, we trust that Kingberring has been the sole person given up, and that none of his infatuated followers were included in the surrender.' Also, in another letter of the nineteenth of May, it was said;—"It pleases us to observe, that the magistrate was cautioned to avoid language that might be interpreted into a promise on the part of our government to deliver up the principal insurgents to the Burmese.' Subsequent communications, however, evincing the

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

incorrigible conduct of the Mughls, and the serious results to which their aggressions might lead, effected a change in the sentiments of the court.

In 1818, the son of the rajah of Ramere arrived on a second mission at Chittagong, and expressed an anxious desire of proceeding to Calcutta with a letter to the governor-general, which his father had written under the express orders of the Burmese king, and of which he gave Mr. Pechell an authenticated copy. The sum of its contents may be thus stated:—‘The countries of Chittagong and Dacca, Moorshedabad and Cassimbazar, do not belong to India: those countries are ours: the British government is faithless: this was not formerly the case. It is not your right to receive the revenues of those countries: it is proper that you should pay them to us: if you do not, we will destroy your country.’

The rajah of Ramere had in all probability counselled his Burmese majesty to wage war with our government, and that monarch thought the present period favorable to his views: it was also known that he held secret correspondence with the Mahrattas, and was prepared to assist them and the Pindarries by invading the frontier of Bengal: but before the mission could reach its destination, lord Hastings had triumphed over those predatory hordes; and the Burmese troops had sustained serious reverses in a conflict with the people of Siam: the course therefore adopted by his lordship, was to treat this communication as a gross forgery, and to send back the letter as a document fabricated in the august name of ‘the king of all the elephants:’ thus he escaped the necessity of noticing an insolent menace, to the great satisfaction of the Burmese sovereign himself.

Nothing was done to irritate the court of Ava during the administration of lord Hastings; nor did any serious incursions of the Mugh emigrants take place after the death of Kingberring; yet the tone of communications made by the Burmese government and officers became more and more insolent; while our evident desire to avoid a rupture seemed only to

provoke them to hostilities. This feeling on their part arose from a gross miscalculation of our resources as well as their own; and it is impossible to read official details of the correspondence, without a conviction, that the crisis which afterwards occurred, could not, under any circumstances, have been much longer deferred.

In June, 1819, Minderajee-praw, the Burmese monarch, terminated a long and prosperous reign of thirty-seven years; and the state paper, announcing his death, declared, 'that the immortal king had gone up to amuse himself in the celestial regions.' He was succeeded by a grandson; who, having been solemnly crowned on the second of November at Ava, proceeded immediately to reduce under subjection the province of Cassay; by which conquest the Burmese frontiers were pushed forward to the eastern boundary of Bengal, Dinapore, the Sylhet hills, and ridges of Cachar: nor was it long before this close contact with our Indian empire led to fresh disputes. In 1822, a large body of the persecuted people of Assam emigrated into our territory; and, as in the case of the Arracanese, were pursued by a formidable force, sent to reclaim them: but the assurance, that these refugees should be strictly kept from exercising any act of hostility, satisfied the Burmese commander for the present; while the attention of the monarch was wholly occupied with the reduction of Siam, the favorite object of his predecessors on the throne. In order to effect the final overthrow of that state, an effort was made to obtain the concurrence of the king of Cochin China; but whatever may have been the plans of attack, the relative frontiers remained unaltered, when the eventful contest broke out between the British government and the Burmese empire.⁵ After

⁵ The extent of this empire is reckoned by Malte Brun to be about 1050 geographical miles in length, and 600 in breadth, containing probably 194,000 square miles. The population, the numbers of which are variously and vaguely estimated, consists of,—1. The proper Burmans of the Irrawaddy; 2. The Talain or Peguans; 3. The Siamese of the conquered provinces; 4. The Kiayn of the western mountains; 5. The Arracanese of the coast; 6. The Karayn, a tribe of cultivators; 7. The Cassayers, or Kathee people; beside several tribes in the mountains and on the frontiers.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.
Com-
mencement
of hostili-
ties with
the Bur-
mese.

various petty acts of animosity, a body of the enemy, in September, 1823, took forcible possession of the island of Shapuree; but the invaders were quickly expelled, and an explanation was demanded: their next act of hostility was the advance of 2000 men, for the purpose of restoring the deposed rajah of Cachar, who had sought refuge within the Burmese dominions: Ghumbur Sing, his successor, was supported by the British; and the country had been for some time under our protection. These acts, therefore, together with the contemptuous silence preserved by the court of Ava against every remonstrance on the subject, were the ostensible causes of the war; and early in this year, (1824,) orders were given for equipping a force of 5000 or 6000 men, at the presidencies of Fort William and St. George, under the respective orders of brigadier-general M'Creagh, and brigadier-general Macbean: the two divisions were directed to assemble at Port Cornwallis, in the Great Andaman island; whence the combined forces, under major-general sir Archibald Campbell, were to proceed to attack Rangoon, the principal sea-port of the Burmese. The naval force attached to this expedition, consisted of the Liffey, of fifty guns, commodore Grant; Slaney, twenty, captain C. Mitchell; Larne, twenty, captain F. Marryat; and Sophie, eighteen, captain G. F. Ryves; four of the honorable company's cruisers, under captain H. Hardy, with various brigs, schooners, and other small craft, manned by Lascars; twenty row-boats, each carrying an eighteen-pounder at the bow, under the command of Mr. W. Lindquist, of the Bengal pilot service; and the Diana steam vessel, the first ever seen in India, which had been purchased by the supreme government at the particular request of captain Marryat. The total number of fighting men embarked at Calcutta and Madras was 8071; 4077 being British troops. On the fifth of May this expedition put to sea; when a part of the force was detached under general M'Creagh against the island of Cheduba, and another under major Wahab against Negrais: the rest of the fleet, on the

eleventh of May, led by the Liffey and Larne, sailed up the Rangoon river, without any pilots on board; and, in a few hours, anchored off the town. As the place was utterly unprepared for resistance, its governor, after a cannonade from the principal battery, which was quickly silenced by the Liffey, directed the whole mass of inhabitants to be driven into the inmost recesses of the jungle, regardless of the inevitable misery attendant on so barbarous a measure: the wretched mud houses of the city were abandoned to the invaders, while every thing that could serve for provision was removed far beyond their reach; and the few British merchants and American missionaries resident at the place, who had been placed in strict confinement, and threatened with death, were marched in fetters a few miles into the country, and lodged near the great pagoda;⁶ but these were soon delivered by the advanced guard of the British army. The greatest distress was experienced by our troops from this system, constantly pursued, of driving away the inhabitants, and leaving the whole country destitute of provisions.

Our army came unprovided with sufficient equipment for advancing by land or by water; for it was imagined that the capture of Rangoon, or at least of that and the enemy's other maritime possessions, would induce the king to accept the moderate demands of our government; or, at all events, that the country would afford sufficient water transport to enable a considerable corps to proceed up the Irrawaddy; especially as the co-operation of the people of Pegu, a conquered tribe governed by despotic and mercenary chiefs, was confidently relied on: but it soon appeared that we had been deceived by erroneous accounts; that we had to expect decided hostility from both Burmese and Peguans; that the boatmen of the great

⁶ This magnificent building, called the Shoedagon, stands at the summit of an abrupt eminence, about two miles and a half from Rangoon. The conical hill itself is seventy-five feet above the road: the area on its top is upwards of two acres, in the centre of which space the pagoda is erected; in shape resembling an inverted speaking trumpet, 338 feet in height, surmounted by a cap made of brass, forty-five feet high: the whole being richly gilt — See Snodgrass's History of the Burmese War, p. 15.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

river, being in a peculiar manner devoted to their monarch, had removed every vessel that could be serviceable, while we had brought very few in our train. Such were the situation and prospects of our army at the commencement of the rainy season; the longest that is experienced in any part of India, and during which no troops can remain in the field twenty-four hours together: it was also kept in constant alarm by nightly irruptions of the enemy into its lines; without having any means of transporting a single gun, and without a hope of inducing the wretched inhabitants, who had been driven into the jungles, to return into the town: the chief command, however, had been given to an officer of great ability and zeal, who was ably seconded both in the military and naval department: in such a case, what are the obstacles, which a British army will not surmount?

The court of Ava had been for many months preparing, not only for a rupture with our government, but even for offensive operations: the invasion, however, of its own territories, especially of the distant coasts of Pegu and Tenasserim, was overlooked in its warlike plans; and when his Burmese majesty was told that such a thing was likely to occur, he replied, in the true Eastern style;—‘As to Rangoon, I will take such measures, as shall prevent the English from even disturbing the women cooking their rice:’⁷ as soon, therefore, as our actual disembarkation became known, no time was lost in making vigorous preparations for our expulsion; every village and town within 300 miles of the seat of war being obliged to send its complement of armed men, under their respective chiefs; while the Irrawaddy was covered with fleets of warriors from all the towns on its banks, proceeding to the general rendezvous of the grand army.

The first conflict took place on the sixteenth of May; when captain R. Birch, with the grenadier company of his majesty’s thirty-eighth regiment, embarked on board the Liffey’s boats, commanded by lieutenant James Wilkinson, for the purpose of dislodging the

⁷ Snodgrass, p. 25.

enemy from the village of Kemmendine, a war-boat station three miles above Rangoon; and although the impenetrable jungle and other obstacles prevented the complete success of this little band, yet they gallantly stormed several strong stockades, one of which was defended by 400 men, who were quickly driven out at the point of the bayonet, leaving behind them sixty dead. 'The enemy,' says captain Richards, 'were well armed, a great proportion having muskets; and a small field piece was taken in the stockade. I must do them the justice to say, that they fought with great spirit; many of them receiving our charge bravely on their spears.' In this contest, lieutenant T. Kerr and one private were killed, and nine wounded; while lieutenant Wilkinson, R.N., received a ball through his thigh, and eight or nine of his crew were wounded. On the thirty-first, captain Marryat succeeded to the chief command of the naval force, as commodore Grant retired, on account of ill health, to Pulo Penang, where he died in July following.

Toward the end of May, the enemy had become more daring, as their numbers increased; and gradually approaching the British position, began to throw up stockades⁸ in the jungle, within hearing of our advanced posts: in the formation and defence of this kind of fortification the Burmese are instructed and trained from early youth; and they display in it so much skill and judgment, that for many years their wars have been a regular series of conquests.

Their approaches met with every possible encouragement from the British commander; who, being unable to attempt any distant operation, was anxious to come into close contact with his antagonists. On the morning of the twenty-eighth, an advanced corps being stockaded within little more than musket-shot distance from our piquets, sir Archibald Campbell, taking four companies of Europeans, and 400 native infantry, with two field-pieces, moved out to recon-

⁸ Strong enclosures formed of the trunks of trees, mounted with cannon, and pierced for musketry: in the interior they often dig holes, into which the defenders retire; so that a work full of men appears to be deserted.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

noitre: his advance-guard soon came on the first stockade thrown across the path; but the work being incomplete, its defenders retired, after exchanging a few shots. The column, continuing its march, found at every turn of the road breastworks and half-finished stockades, hastily abandoned; since this early visit was not anticipated: a progress of about five miles brought our troops to a narrow wooden bridge over a morass, where the enemy was beginning to form: this had just been forced by the fire of artillery, when one of those tremendous storms, which usher in the south-west monsoon, came on; and as the field-pieces could be dragged no farther, our general left them in charge of the native infantry, and advanced, with his European troops, through the tempest. The enemy soon appeared in large bodies; and their chiefs, on horseback, were seen forming their men to defend a gorge in front; while this small body of Europeans continued to advance, by *échelon* of companies, against a force of 4000 or 5000 men: our left flank, which moved close to the jungle, found some villages defended in front by two stockades, whence proceeded shouts of defiance from men confident in themselves and in the strength of their position: they at once commenced a heavy fire on our leading companies; and these, unable to return it, owing to the wet state of their muskets, instantly resolved to close with their opponents; the right company being directed to keep its line firm on the plain, while the other three rushed impetuously on the works: those, being of a low description, not exceeding eight feet in height, were soon forced; and the very numbers of the enemy, by creating disorder, increased their destruction. The conflict was fierce and sanguinary: each stockade having only one or two narrow ways of egress, its defenders, when driven from the ramparts, soon became an unmanageable mass; and being rendered desperate by repeated volleys, they were seen, with spear or musket couched, and heads lowered to a butting position, blindly charging on our bayonets; for until they had been taught by severe retaliation to treat with mercy those whom the fortune

of war threw into their power, the Burmese neither gave nor expected quarter; continuing to fight with the utmost fury long after all hope of success or escape had vanished: nor did it remain optional with our men to spare the lives of an enemy, from whose barbarous and treacherous mode of warfare death alone afforded safety: the experiment was often tried, but tried in vain: humanity might prompt a British soldier to pass a fallen or a vanquished foe; but when he found his forbearance rewarded by a shot, or the spear's point, as soon as his back was turned, self-preservation taught him the necessity of more decisive measures.

During the attack on these two stockades, the Burmese general in the plain made no movement for their defence, probably supposing that we had a larger force intentionally kept out of sight; but as soon as our troops were seen in possession of the works, the whole line, with a horrid yell, began to advance, until checked by the company which had been left, and by the appearance of the troops which had carried the works moving forward to receive these new opponents: our killed and wounded were then carried from the field, and the little band marched back unmolested to their quarters: after this action, an attempt at negotiation, or rather at deception, was tried by the enemy, while they were occupied in erecting fortifications. A large body had taken post at Kemmendine, the station for war-boats, three miles up the river, with elevated ground and forests in its rear: this also was attacked by our troops, assisted by the naval force; and several strong stockades were carried with great gallantry: some days of quiet then ensued; but all the towns and villages continued to be deserted: the herds were swept from the plains, and the boats from the rivers, whilst every man beyond our posts was in arms against us: Before the end of June, the enemy recovered from their panic; and, having received large reinforcements, advanced again under Sykia Wongee, third minister of state; when the jungles seemed to be animated by living masses; and their noisy preparations formed a remarkable contrast with the stillness and quiet of the

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

British lines: our force, much diminished through sickness and death, was recruited by the eighty-ninth British regiment from Madras, and the junction of detachments that had been sent to the capture of Cheduba and Negrais; which places soon fell into our hands.

In the beginning of July, a battle took place round the great pagoda, to the disadvantage of the Burmese, and Sykia Wongee was recalled in disgrace; but his successor, Soomba Wongee, the second minister, though he fought with determined bravery, and placed his troops in the strongest possible stockades, lost his life, as well as 800 men in the fortifications; while the jungles and villages around were filled with unhappy wretches left there to perish. Soon afterwards, the rains were at their height, and the adjacent lands almost wholly under water: in the mean time, an expedition was sent to the eastward, under colonel Miles; when Tavoy surrendered, Mergui was taken by storm, and the whole coast of Tenasserim gladly accepted British protection.

To inspire confidence in the people after their recent defeats, and to keep the officers strictly to their duty, the princes of Tonghoo and Irrawaddy, brothers of the king, were ordered down from Ava; when the first of these established his head-quarters at Pegu; and the latter at Donoobew, on the river, about sixty miles from Rangoon; where fortifications had been thrown up with great care, to form a post of reserve, and a dépôt for the army. The princes came, accompanied by numerous astrologers, as well as by a corps called the king's invulnerables, men curiously tattooed, and accustomed to exhibit the war dance of defiance, and expose themselves to the hottest fire of an enemy, that they might inspire courage in the rest. A few skirmishes took place occasionally; but several weeks elapsed before the astrologers could mark out a propitious day for attacking our position: at length, the night of the thirtieth of August was fixed on, when the invulnerables promised to assault and carry the great pagoda, that the princes and grandes might

celebrate the grand annual festival in that sacred place: accordingly, on the night in question, they advanced in a compact body, armed with swords and muskets, uttering clamorous imprecations against the impious strangers; being guided by a few glimmering lanterns, toward the northern gateway: at length, the darkness was broken by vivid flashes from our guns; showers of grape shot, and successive volleys of musketry, fell among the invulnerables, making such havoc in their dense masses, that no longer endeavoring to support their character, they fled from the scene of action, and sought safety in the neighboring jungle.

The time was now arrived, when the defeats and disasters of the Burmese army could be no longer concealed, and when it was necessary to repair the loss of honor which it had sustained. In this emergency, his majesty had recourse to the most celebrated of all his generals; one to whom the empire was indebted for some of its most valuable acquisitions; and who had proceeded, before our expedition reached Rangoon, to take the command of an Arracan army, destined for the invasion of Bengal; nor had he neglected to provide golden fetters, in which the governor-general of India might be led captive to Ava. This officer, called Maha Bandoola, on his arrival in Arracan, quickly commenced offensive operations; and, having pushed his forces as far as Ramoo, surrounded a detachment, consisting of five companies of the twenty-third native infantry, three of the thirtieth, and some provincials, with the Mugh levy, and artillery; when he overwhelmed and routed the whole force. The highest alarm was excited in Bengal by this victory; the peasants fled in dismay from their villages; and the native merchants of Calcutta were with difficulty persuaded to remain with their families and property under the protection of Fort William: the enemy, however, did not advance beyond Ramoo; but employed themselves in erecting stockades, which Bandoola intended as the basis of his future operations, at the return of the cool season. The defeats, however, of the Burmese army in the vicinity of Rangoon, and the

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

reduction of Martaban, Mergui, and Tenasserim, induced his sovereign to recall him for the defence of the golden empire: thus the inhabitants of Bengal were relieved from their anxiety; the war was transferred to the central provinces of Burmah; and the grand struggle took place on the banks of the mighty Irrawaddy.

Soon after the retreat of Bandoola, the state of British India became alarming from another source. The company's native troops had generally imbibed a superstitious terror of the Burmese; and several regiments, stationed at Barrackpore, covering their aversion for the service under various pretexts of grievances, refused to march, and broke out into open mutiny; it was, however, subdued by the promptitude of sir Edward Paget, who placed himself at the head of two British regiments and a company of artillery; with which, after some fruitless endeavors to recall the mutineers to their duty, he attacked and dispersed them, when drawn up in line, under a declared resolution of opposing force to force. Considerable numbers of these misguided men fell by the discharges of artillery; but of those taken, twelve only were executed; the sentence of the rest being commuted for hard labor in irons during fourteen years: nothing less could have averted the danger of an example, which threatened to shake our Indian empire to its foundation.

The arrival of Maha Bandoola at Ava, where the highest honors and chief military command were conferred on him, was speedily communicated to the crest-fallen levies in front of the British station; where his name not only restored confidence, but acted as a spell to draw the reluctant people round his banners: in the mean time, whilst a large fleet of war-boats, with a train of artillery, was preparing to fall down the river, and orders were issued for detachments to join Bandoola on his progress, the endemic fever of the rainy season, and a severe dysentery were thinning the British ranks, and filling their hospitals: in this situation, it was happily determined to move the

sufferers to Mergui and Tavoy, where the salubrity of the climate effected wonders. 'Men,' says major Snodgrass, 'who had for months remained in a most debilitated state at Rangoon, rapidly recovered on arriving at Mergui, and were soon restored in full health and vigor to their duty.' Negotiations were now entered into with the Siamese government: but though feuds and enmity had ever existed between them and the Burmese state, the Siamese had suffered too much from their foes, and were too strongly convinced of our impotence against the dreaded Burmans, to join us in active hostilities.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

On the eleventh of September, the *Arachne* was reported off the bar: captain Marryat, with only twenty-seven of his original ship's company on board, was then dropping down from Rangoon; but he delayed two days, in order to give captain Chads every information in his power. The important command held by captain Marryat under such peculiar circumstances had been exercised in a manner most creditable to that officer; who did not give over his charge to captain Ryves, until the enemy had been decidedly repulsed; so that sir Archibald Campbell officially stated his conviction, that two sloops, the *Sophie* and *Satellite*, were sufficient to protect the shipping: he was promoted into the *Tees* by captain Coe, when that officer, who had lately arrived, assumed the command of the *Liffey*; and captain Chads was now invested with the chief direction of the naval force attached to the expedition.

In the early part of November, the rains having ceased, the health of our army became re-established; the cool season had set in; and a forward movement was anticipated with joy by the troops; but before this could take place, the whole military force of Ava, now advancing on Rangoon, was to be disposed of: seasonable reinforcements, however, were sent from Calcutta; and a regiment of cavalry, a troop of horse-artillery, and a rocket corps were ordered to join. The Burmese army, the largest and best-equipped that had ever been sent into the field, con-

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

sisted of 35,000 musketeers, great numbers of whom were armed with jingals, a small but annoying piece, carrying a ball from six to twelve ounces in weight, and mounted on a carriage, which two men could easily move about: the Cassay horse amounted to 700; and a considerable body of men were attached to the guns; the rest of the force, making a sum total of 60,000 men, being armed with short swords and long spears, which by the great physical strength of the Burmese are rendered very formidable weapons: but the army would not have been thought complete without the addition of some corps of invulnerables; who, being amply provided with charms, spells, and opium, afforded in the ensuing operations great amusement to our soldiers, by their dances of defiance, committing all sorts of extravagances, with a prodigal exposure of their lives.⁹

At length, this congregated force assembled, on the thirtieth of November, in the extensive forest of Rangoon, fronting the great Shoedagon pagoda; and its line, extending from the river above Kenmendine in a semicircular direction toward Puzendown, was to be discerned by volumes of smoke rising from the different bivouacs: during the following night, the low hum of voices, proceeding from this encampment, suddenly ceased; and was succeeded by the distant but gradually increasing sounds of a multitude in slow and stealthy movement through the woods: our commanders soon became aware that the enemy's masses had approached to the very edge of the jungle, within musket-shot of the pagoda, ready to rush from their cover at break of day. In the morning a number of war boats had been observed by the Teignmouth stealing down the river; and in the evening, they came forward with fire-rafts; which induced captain Goodridge to slip and pass the point in order to avoid them: this left the post open to a furious attack by land and water; but it was nobly defended by the garrison under major Yates, consisting of the twenty-sixth Madras native infantry, and a mere handful of

⁹ See Snodgrass, p. 96.

Europeans, supported on the river by a small naval force.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

The morning of the first of December had scarcely dawned, when hostilities commenced with a heavy fire of musketry and cannon at Kemmendine, where the Teignmouth was again unfortunately driven from her station by fire-rafts; and our troops, at the great pagoda, could distinctly hear the yells and shouts of the infuriated assailants, occasionally returned by hearty cheers from the British seamen, as they poured their heavy broadsides into the resolute and persevering masses: when the firing ceased, and the thick canopy of smoke dispersed, the masts of our vessels were seen at their old station off the fort. In the course of the forenoon, Burmese columns appeared on the west side of the river, marching in five or six divisions, under numerous chiefs, whose gilt *chattahs*, or umbrellas, glittered in the sun; and when they reached the bank opposite to Rangoon, they began to erect stockades and batteries for the destruction of our shipping: later in the day, several heavy columns were seen issuing out of the forest, with flags and banners, about a mile from the eastern face of the pagoda; and different corps, successively taking up their positions along a sloping woody ridge, formed the left of the line; the centre of which extended from the pagoda to Kemmendine: thus the British forces were nearly surrounded. When this presumptuous position was occupied, a singular kind of operation commenced; for the troops, laying aside their arms, began to ply their intrenching tools with such activity and skill, that in about two hours their whole line had disappeared, and could only be traced by a mound of new earth gradually increasing in height: behind such a parapet, the moving masses, which so lately attracted attention, had sunk into the ground, as by enchantment; and the existence of these subterranean legions could hardly have been credited, but for the occasional movement of a chief, with his gilt *chattah*, superintending the works: they were, however, soon taught the danger of such manœuvres before a British

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

army; for a detachment forced their intrenchments, coming on them almost unperceived; and having driven the whole line from cover, retired unmolested from the numerous bodies that were now forming on all sides.

The trenches were discovered to be a succession of holes, capable of receiving two men each, and excavated so as to shelter their occupants from the weather, as well as from the fire of an enemy: every hole contained also a sufficient supply of rice, water, and even fuel, for its inmates; while under the excavated bank, a bed of straw or of brushwood was prepared, on which one man could sleep, while the other kept watch. In the course of the evening, the Burmese re-occupied their trenches, which they protected by a strong corps: during the day, repeated attacks on Kemmendine had been made and repulsed, chiefly through the gallant conduct of captain Chads, his officers, and the crews of vessels, who lent every possible assistance to our troops; but it was not till darkness had set in, that the last desperate effort was made against that post: already had the wearied soldiers laid themselves down to rest, when suddenly the whole heavens were illuminated by the blaze of several tremendous fire-rafts, floating with an ebb tide down the river, amidst incessant peals of cannon and musketry, and followed by war-boats eager to take advantage of the confusion that might ensue: the skill and intrepidity, however, of British seamen defeated all these contrivances; for, entering their boats, they grappled the flaming rafts, and conducted them past the shipping, or ran them ashore: on the land side also, the enemy were defeated with a heavy loss in the most resolute attempt as yet made to reach the interior of our station.

At daylight, on the second, the Burmese were observed still busy in every part of their line; and they soon intrenched themselves within musket-shot of the northern face of the great pagoda: as their fire could now be brought to bear on the very barracks of our soldiers, it became necessary to dislodge them from particular points; and however bold they appeared

under cover, it was found that at the decisive charge they quailed before the courage of European troops. The series of attacks and combats, manifesting great spirit in the enemy's soldiers, and considerable skill in their general, lasted seven days: the left wing of their army, though defeated with much slaughter, merely retreated on their right; and the struggle was renewed until that division also was routed with a loss of 5000 men, and an immense store of artillery: still undismayed, 25,000 men, the remnant of this vast army rallied, and intrenched themselves within four miles of the great pagoda, at the village of Kokeen, 'with a judgment,' as sir A. Campbell observes, 'that would have done credit to engineers of the most civilised and warlike nation.' From this post, however, they were driven, after several brilliant exploits, in which the operations of our army were powerfully seconded by the flotilla.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

Not satisfied with military manœuvres, the Burmese now had recourse to negotiations of the most treacherous and deceitful nature; priding themselves on the success of a lie, and not showing the slightest symptoms of shame at detection and exposure: besides, as an immense number of inhabitants had returned to Rangoon, they introduced incendiaries into that town, who lighted up a conflagration which destroyed more than one-fourth of the place, and was only extinguished by extraordinary efforts: during the whole of this time, our vessels and their boats were occupied in destroying terrific fire-rafts; which, in general, were about 100 feet square, composed of dried wood, piled up with oil, turpentine, gunpowder, and other combustibles. In January, 1825, the Burmese generalissimo was found to have stationed himself at Donoobew, about fifty miles up the river; where, having drawn to his army all the resources of Pegu, he prepared himself to sustain an attack: it was now determined by the British commander to advance into the interior of the empire, though his invading force was still small, and his Siamese allies were not yet inclined to take an active part in operations: on the thirteenth of

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

February, sir Archibald joined the camp at Mienza, passing through forests lined for many miles by formidable stockades, where the enemy had lain during the inclement season: along the whole line of march, our army found the country deserted, and the villages destroyed; their inhabitants being most cruelly treated by the Burmese chiefs. On the twenty-sixth, his majesty's ship, *Alligator*, arrived at Rangoon; and captain Chads, who had been hitherto acting on his own responsibility, was superseded in his command by captain Alexander.

On the twenty-sixth, our troops arrived at Soomza, after marching fourteen miles through a magnificent forest, where most of the trees, in point of size and straightness, would have made mainmasts for the largest ships: the governor of this place had retired from his post; but being apprehensive of punishment for not opposing us with more resolution, he sent several messages, expressing his anxiety to come in and place himself under British protection: watched, however, as he was by numerous spies, and wandering about in constant fear for his life, he could find no opportunity of eluding the vigilance of his guards. One of these vile assassins at last came up to the unhappy man with a pretended letter of forgiveness from the prince of Irrawaddy; and while his victim was in the act of reading it, severed his head from his body.¹⁰

In the mean time, Donoobew was attacked by a division under brigadier-general Cotton, and its out-works were carried in gallant style; but the main work was discovered to be too strong to risk a farther advance, and our troops were for a time withdrawn. By the eighteenth of March, general Campbell had performed an arduous task; crossing the Irrawaddy to the west bank, with his whole force, in a few canoes of the country: by making roads, and other labors, he reached Donoobew on the twenty-fifth, and found there his old adversary, Maha Bandoola, at the head of 15,000 veterans, with fortifications well mounted

¹⁰ Snodgrass, p. 149.

and manned; while a numerous cavalry hovered on the British flanks, and everything about the stockades betokened order and confidence. On the second of April, the British camp was pitched before these extensive works; and a heavy fire, which the enemy had kept up all the morning, intirely ceased: but there was something in this calm which foreboded a coming storm; accordingly, about ten o'clock, when the moon was fast verging toward the horizon, a sharp sound of musketry, mingled with war cries, roused our sleeping camp; and the wearied soldiers, mechanically seizing their muskets, instantly formed a line: this was scarcely done, when the opposing columns advanced impetuously with an intention of turning our right; at the same time keeping up a distant fire against the left and centre. On their out-flanking the right, our two extreme regiments changed front, and, by a constant discharge of musketry, checked every attack; so that the assailants returned in hopeless silence to their irritated commander, to receive the general reward of failure on such occasions.

After various petty actions, by river as well by land, the mortar-batteries and rockets began their work of destruction on the first of April; and on the second, at daybreak, the breaching batteries opened, when two Lascars, who had been left prisoners in the fort, came running out to inform our commander that Bandoola had been killed the day before by a rocket, and that no intreaties of the other chiefs could prevail on the garrison to remain; but the whole had dispersed and fled the preceding night: this information was found quite correct; for the enemy had retired with so much secresy and haste, that not a gun was removed; and even a large dépôt of grain was left uninjured. During the whole of these operations, very effective service was rendered by the navy; which assisted in forcing stockades, capturing formidable war-boats, and conveying troops to the best places of attack: both captains, Alexander and Chads, merited and received high praise for their exertions from the commander-in-chief.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

Capture of
Prome.

After the dispersion of Bandoola's forces, Prome was considered the only point where the invading army could be stopped; and there the utmost energies of local authorities were employed in fortifying the place and organising a force. New generals were called out, and a numerous artillery was on its way from Ava, to occupy the summits of the surrounding hills; in a word, the whole disposable force of the empire was concentrating itself at a spot, memorable for many sanguinary battles fought there with the people of Pegu: all these preparations, however, were wholly disconcerted by the rapid movement of our army, which, at daylight on the twenty-fifth, found itself under the ridge of hills that cover Prome to the south; each being stockaded to its very summit: but the fortifications were unoccupied; the enemy had evacuated every post; and our leading column, pushing on to the city, found it in a conflagration: every exertion, however, was immediately made to extinguish the flames, which were at length got under, after numerous habitations had been destroyed. If some negotiations, which the deceitful chiefs entered into with our commander, had occasioned a delay of only two days, according to their wishes, Prome would not have been taken without an immense sacrifice of lives. The troops, which accompanied the prince of Irrawaddy in his flight, burned and laid waste every village in their route, driving thousands of helpless people from their houses to the woods: this now became the plan of warfare; and even Russia, in her memorable resistance to the French armies, did not offer to invading hosts such a scene of desolation: neither man nor beast escaped the retiring columns; and heaps of ashes, with groups of howling dogs, alone indicated the spots where villages and towns had stood. While these important movements occurred, a series of brilliant and sharply contested actions had put the British in possession of Arracan: from Cachar also and Assam the Burmese were totally expelled; and thus terminated the second campaign of this bloody and devastating war. Prome, where our army took up its quarters

for the rainy season, is 120 miles from Rangoon, but still distant 250 from Ava: cantonments were there prepared for the troops, and the inhabitants invited by every encouragement to revisit their habitations; so that the poor wretches now came from all quarters, in a starving condition: a *dépôt* was then formed, large fleets of canoes were constructed, carts and cattle for the transport of commissariat stores were provided, and due preparations made for the ensuing campaign: nor was the Burmese court and its infatuated monarch idle; for his bad advisers prevailed, and all the overtures of our general were treated with contempt: troops were now levied in every part of the kingdom; even large bounties, a thing unheard of before, were given; and the tributary Shan tribes, bordering on China, were called on to furnish their contingent force: 1500 men of this nation, headed by their *chobwas*, or chiefs, arrived in full hope of sharing the plunder of the conquered invaders; so that before the end of September, a disposable army of 70,000 men was ready to act against the different columns which threatened an advance against the capital. On the twenty-second of September, sir James Brisbane, who had been appointed to succeed commodore Grant in command of his majesty's Indian squadron, arrived at Prome, bringing with him the boats and seamen of the *Boadicea* frigate to augment our flotilla; the command of which he entrusted to that active and intelligent officer, captain Chads: previous to the final struggle, commissioners met to discuss terms of pacification; but where there was no honesty on one side, and no want of penetration on the other, all proposals failed. A line of demarcation had been settled, and an armistice agreed on; but the Burmese troops soon began to transgress both the one and the other; and our terms being haughtily rejected, they prepared to engage us, by advancing on Prome in three divisions: the right, under Sudda Woon, consisting of 15,000 men, having crossed the Irrawaddy, moved along its western bank, intending to intercept us in the rear; the centre, of about 30,000,

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

commanded by the Kee Wongee, or head minister, in person, advanced along the eastern side with numerous war-boats and stores; while the left, also 15,000 strong, under Maha Nemiow, a famous old general, who had the chief direction of the army, moved by a route about ten miles distant from the river, and separated from it by an extensive forest. In addition to these corps, there was a reserve of 10,000 men, commanded by the king's half-brother, prince Memiaboo, occupying a strongly-fortified post at Melloone; also another force was ready to oppose any movement from Arracan; and Sykia Wongee still carried on a desultory warfare in the vicinity of Pegu, threatening also Rangoon. The effective British force to contend with these formidable enemies, consisted only of 5000 men, beside a garrison to maintain Prome; and of these only 3000 were Europeans: but some native regiments were opposed to Sykia Wongee, and others were in garrison at Rangoon.

In the first engagement between our advanced guard and Maha Nemiow's division, the British suffered severely; their commander, colonel M'Dowall, was slain; and the troops were obliged to retreat. Encouraged by this success, the old general marched directly on Prome, but with great caution; stockading his troops at every mile of his advance, while a corresponding movement was made by the other divisions; and the central corps was now distinctly observed from our quarters, fortifying the heights of Napadee, above the river, about five miles distant: seeing little prospect of a speedy crisis in the cautious tactics of his adversary, sir A. Campbell resolved at once to become the assailant.

The corps of Maha Nemiow had for some days been stationary close to Prome, strengthening its position, and observing the utmost vigilance: about 8000 of his men were Shans, whose confidence had not yet been shaken by contact with our troops; and in addition to a numerous list of *chobwas* and petty princes, these levies were accompanied by three young and beautiful women of high rank, believed by their

superstitious countrymen to be endowed with the gift of prophecy, and to possess the miraculous power of turning aside musket balls: these Amazons, dressed in warlike apparel, rode among the troops, inspiring them with an ardent desire to meet a foe, known to them as yet only by the deceitful account of their Burmese masters.¹¹

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

On the thirtieth of November, arrangements were made to attack the enemy's forces next morning; commodore sir James Brisbane, with the flotilla, being directed to cannonade their posts on both sides of the river at daylight; while a body of native infantry should make a feigned attack on their centre, as the columns were marching out for the real attack on their left at Simbike: for this purpose, our principal force was formed into two columns; one, under brigadier-general Cotton, marching by the direct road; while the other, led by the commander-in-chief, crossed the Nawine river, and moved along its right bank, to come round on the Burmese rear, and to cut off all retreat. Our troops had scarcely commenced their march, when a furious and well-directed cannonade on the river completely deceived the enemy, drew off his piquets, and left his position open to assault: the advance of general Cotton's column was opposed by a succession of stockades thrown across an open space in the centre of the jungle, having the Nawine river in the rear, a thick wood on either flank, and assailable only in front, where the assailants were exposed to cross fires from the zigzag formation of the works: our troops, however, moved on with their usual intrepidity; while the Shans, encouraged by the presence of their veteran commander, who was carried from place to place in a gilded litter, cheered also by the exhortations and gallant bearing of their Amazons, offered a brave resistance: but no sooner was a lodgment made in their crowded works, than, unable to stop the progress of the assailants, or to stand against the volleys of musketry, they fell into utter dismay and confusion. Horses and men ran wildly

¹¹ Snodgrass, p. 231.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

from side to side, trying to avoid the murderous fire; parties were employed to break an outlet from their own enclosures; while the gray-headed *chobwas* set a splendid example of valor to their followers, singly maintaining the contest sword in hand, refusing quarter, and attacking all who approached even with the most humane intentions. Maha Nemiow himself fell bravely fighting; and his body, together with his sword, his Wongee's chain, and other insignia, were found among the slain: one of the fair Amazons also received a bullet in her breast; and being recognised, was carried to a cottage in the rear, where she expired. In the mean time, sir A. Campbell's column, pushing rapidly on, met the flying foe in the rear, and opened a deadly fire from our horse artillery: another of the Shan ladies was here observed retreating on horseback with her defeated troops; but before she could gain the opposite bank of the Nawine river, a Shrapnel shell exploded over her head; when, falling from her horse, she was carried off by her attendants.¹²

The British commander was now enabled to attack the enemy's centre before the defeat of their left wing was generally known: in this operation he was completely successful; being greatly assisted by our flotilla, which, during the attack, rapidly passed the works, and captured all the boats and stores brought down for the enemy's troops. The division of Sadda Woon, protected by the intervention of the Irrawaddy, now alone remained; but this was attacked by a party conveyed across the stream by ships; its stockades were forced; and the whole corps, broken up and dispersed, fled in all directions through the woods.

It was now determined to advance on Ava; and nothing was wanting in the troops, or forgotten by their leader, to ensure success; but the enemy did not even yet despair: the stockades at Meaday had been made as strong as art could make them; and at Mel-loone, on the west bank of the Irrawaddy, the reserve under prince Memiaboo was augmented to 15,000 men; while its defences were represented as a *chef-*

¹² Snodgrass, p. 236.

d'œuvre of Burmese fortification. On the ninth of December, our first division, with the commander-in-chief, began its march; and on the nineteenth arrived at Meaday; 'where,' says major Snodgrass, 'a dreadful scene of misery and death awaited them: within and around the stockades, the ground was strewed with dead and dying, the victims of wounds, disease and want: here and there a small white pagoda marked the spot where some man of rank was interred; while numerous new-made graves denoted, that what was seen, was only a small remnant of their dead which the hurried departure of the enemy had left unburied. The beach and neighboring jungles were filled with dogs and vultures; whose growling and screams, in addition to the pestilential smell of the place, rendered our situation far from pleasant: but as if this scene of death was not sufficient, fresh horrors were added to it by the sanguinary leaders of the unfortunate Burmese: several gibbets were found erected about the stockades, each bearing the mouldering remains of three or four crucified victims; thus cruelly put to death, for perhaps no greater crime than that of wandering from their post in search of food; or at the worst, of following the example set by their chiefs in flying from the foe: for fifty miles up the river, and all along the road by which the enemy retired, similar horrors presented themselves; and on some of the places of encampment, our soldiers could not find a place for their tents without first removing dead bodies to a distance.' On the twenty-first, our little army moved toward Melloone; a handful of men in the heart of an immense empire! pushing boldly on to its capital, nearly 300 miles distant, without a hope of farther reinforcement! On the twenty-sixth, a flag of truce was sent in, with notice that a commissioner, named Kolein Menghie, had arrived, with full powers to conclude a treaty of peace: this led to a discussion, but without effect; for the most glaring falsehoods were hazarded by this new envoy: our troops having been carried across the Irrawaddy under the protection of captain Chads, an attack was made on the boasted

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

fortifications of Melloone; their defenders were driven in utter confusion from the place; and Memiaboo's treasure, to the amount of 40,000 rupees, with all his stud, fell into our hands.

On the twenty-fifth of January, 1826, the army again moved forward, and on the thirty-first was met by Dr. Price, an American missionary, and assistant-surgeon Sandford, who had been made prisoner some months before; both having given their parole of honor to return to the capital, whether successful or not in their mission: these gentlemen brought proposals for a short truce, which was readily granted; and they retired in full hopes that they should be sent back to ratify terms of peace: these however proved fallacious; as 40,000 men had still been collected, by high bounties, by grants of important privileges, and by earnest appeals to his people from a monarch tottering on his throne. This force, which was styled Gong-to-doo, or 'Retrievers of the king's glory,' was placed under the command of a savage warrior, called Nee-Woon-Breen, which has been variously translated, 'Prince of Darkness,' 'King of Hell,' and 'Prince of the Setting Sun.'¹³ On the eighth, when our army was within a day's march of Pagahm-mew, its doubts were wholly removed respecting the certainty of another contest; and next day, as its columns, in number only about 2000, debouched from the forests into the open country, they discovered the Burmese drawn up in an inverted crescent. Undismayed by the strength or position of the enemy, our commander pushed boldly at their centre, which was soon overthrown; no time was given them to rally in their works, whither they were closely pursued, and again routed with great slaughter: hundreds perished by jumping into the river; the whole army was dispersed on the spot; and the unfortunate Nee-Woon-Breen had no sooner reached the capital, than he was cruelly put to death by order of the king; being trodden under foot by elephants taught to prolong the tortures of a criminal. The road to Ava now lay completely open: our troops continued to advance,

¹³ Snodgrass, p. 279.

and arrived within forty-five miles of the capital: there was no longer time for disguise, deceit, or treachery: on the evening of the twenty-fourth of February, therefore, Mr. Price, with two ministers of state, arrived at our camp near Yandaboo, to announce that the king and court would submit to terms: the treaty was then a second time settled, and finally signed; the government engaging to furnish boats for the conveyance of a great part of our force to Rangoon: thus was the war brought to a close; and a small band, composed of British warriors and their Indian fellow-subjects, stood as conquerors in the centre of the great Burmese empire! Alexander's Persian conquest itself was hardly to be compared with this. A latent feeling however of disappointment pervaded our troops: though all felt proud in having compelled a stubborn foe to sign a peace glorious to themselves and their country, yet they were now within three marches of the despot's capital, the source whence the war and all its lengthened miseries had sprung; and it was hardly to be expected that the victorious soldier should turn his back on the 'golden city,' the riches of which he had expected to share, without a sensation of regret: nor was the aspect which the region itself here assumed less inviting; for the country from Pagahm-mew to Ava is most beautiful: 'extensive plains,' says major Snodgrass, 'of the finest land, watered by the Irrawaddy, are interspersed with evergreen woods, just large enough to give beauty and variety to the scenery; and the banks of the river are so thickly studded with villages, pagodas, temples, monasteries, and other handsome buildings, as to afford, under one *coup d'œil*, all the charms of a richly-varied landscape, with the more sterling beauties of a populous and fertile territory.' The acceptance of terms, however, on our part was politic: every sacrifice which the king and people were disposed to make, was intended to preserve the 'golden city' from violation: that once subdued, the court would probably have fled to some distant part of its extensive empire, leaving the conquerors in a position from which necessity would soon have compelled them

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

Conclusion
of the Bur-
mese war.

to retire; with the probable sacrifice of all the objects for which we had been contending, and with the ruinous expenses of the war on our own shoulders.

The following is an epitome of the articles of peace, concluded, on the one hand, by sir A. Campbell, T. C. Robertson, Esq., and captain Chads, R. N., British commissioners; and by Mengyee-Maha-men-hlah-kyanten Wongee, lord of Lay-Kaing, and Mengyee Mahamen-hlah-thu-hah-thoo-Atwen-woon, lord of the revenue, on the part of his Burmese majesty.

The four provinces of Arracan, and the provinces of Mergui, Tavoy, and Zea to be ceded in perpetuity to the honorable company; the Burmese government engaging to pay one crore of rupees by instalments: the provinces or kingdoms of Assam, Cachar, Zeatung, and Munnipore to be placed under princes named by the British government; residents, with an escort of fifty men, being appointed at each court: British ships to be admitted into Burmese ports, to land their cargoes free of duty, not to unship their rudders, or land their guns; Burmese ships having the same privileges in British ports: no person to be molested for their opinions or conduct during the war; and the Siamese nation to be included in the treaty. Dated June 3, 1826.

Each power commenced this war ignorant of the resources of its adversary; but never was a monarch so deceived as his Burmese majesty, or one who required more convincing proofs of error and mistake: not satisfied with so many signal defeats, and undismayed by the steady advance of his foes into the heart of his empire, the king and his ministers stubbornly refused to yield, and to accept of what must be termed lenient conditions from a victorious army. But this singular obstinacy arose from their own nature and practice: a Burmese monarch has never been known to make war but for the sake of conquest; and no instance is recorded of one of their race having relinquished a single acre which he could retain: judging from themselves, they concluded that such also was our policy; and could not credit our offer of giving

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

up so valuable a territory, on their acquiescence in the terms proposed: negotiations therefore had no effect until backed by severe punishment; and thus the sovereign permitted his country to be overwhelmed by a calamity, from the effects of which it may require half a century to recover, rather than listen to accommodation. The provinces ceded to Great Britain are likely to receive great advantages: the new settlement of Amherst-town, on the Saluan river, in the gulf of Martaban, particularly, is well situated as a mart for the Siamese, the Burmese, and even for the Chinese: the whole of these districts, now thinly peopled, will soon become populous; for the inhabitants of Pegu, and even of Ava, already acquainted with the difference between their own arbitrary laws and our more liberal institutions, will fly from oppression to the ceded territory, where security of property and encouragement of industry will soon convert those ill-governed districts into the finest countries of the East. Nor is it likely that our Indian possessions will be again disturbed by the restless and vindictive court of Ava: the cession of Arracan amply secures that side of our empire from interference; while the Burmese monarch cannot be ignorant, that, should he again offend, we can, by marching a force across the mountains, appear on the Irrawaddy in eight or ten days; and before his capital in a month: the 'king of all the elephants,' therefore, though he may intrigue and endeavor to deceive us, will not trouble our government with another war, till the memory of the last is worn out of the remembrance of himself and of his people.

Soon after the conclusion of this contest, our Indian government sent an embassy to Ava, at the head of which was Mr. J. Crawford, who finally settled several points relative to the frontiers, and concluded a treaty of commerce very favorable to the company. The conduct of sir A. Campbell advanced his character for enterprise and prudence, as well as military talent and valor, to high and deserved renown: in the year 1831, he was created a baronet, and proceeded to New

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

Brunswick as lieutenant-governor of that province: he was also presented with a splendid gold medal by the court of directors, to mark their sense of the distinguished skill and gallantry, with which he conducted the Burmese campaign, and led his brave comrades in arms to victory.

We must not omit to observe, that throughout these events, the exertions of the Madras government, under its illustrious governor, were admirable. One-half of the army was sent abroad, either to Rangoon, Chittagong, or Calcutta; yet with the remaining forces sir Thomas Munro contrived to preserve in his province perfect order, which was never interrupted for a moment: to his suggestions also, many of the wisest measures adopted in this war were owing; while not a few, which might have led to disastrous results, were at his remonstrances abandoned: it is due, however, to lord Amherst to state, that he exhibited great firmness, as well as talent, under very trying circumstances; not the least of his excellences being a total absence of that vanity, which too often prompts men in power to reject the wise counsels of their inferiors.

Contemporaneously with the brilliant exploits above mentioned, a very important service was rendered to our Indian empire by the gallant commander-in-chief, lord Combermere: the object of his interposition was to protect a native prince against an usurper; but on the good or ill success of that interposition, as it is well known, depended the peace of India, or the invasion of our power by a formidable league of native princes. The late rajah of Bhurtpoor had died in strict alliance with our government; and, by the terms of the treaty, each party was bound to assist the other against all enemies: apprehensive, however, of the consequences that might ensue after his death, the rajah, during his life-time, had announced his son, Bulwurt Singh, as his successor, and included him in the treaty of alliance: but when his decease took place, his nephew, Doorjun Sâl, having gained a party in the army, raised a successful revolt, obtained possession of Bhurtpoor, and seated himself on the musnud.

The expelled prince then applied for aid to sir David Ochterlony, the company's resident at Delhi; and that officer embraced his cause; but his conduct in so doing was disavowed by lord Amherst, who showed a strong disposition to proceed on the absurd principle of non-interference: farther information, however, induced him to change this intention; and lord Combermere was sent with an army to expel the usurper.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

Having taken the field with 25,000 European and native troops, his lordship directed his first attempt against Bhurtpoor itself, a fortress of immense strength, celebrated for its successful resistance to the force employed against it by lord Lake in 1805, and considered by the natives as impregnable.

The fortifications of this place were such, that one might have supposed them to have been erected in those days of unlimited command over life and labor which produced the pyramids: the wall was of mud, sixty feet in thickness, and of great height, with a very wide and deep ditch: the citadel stood at the eastern extremity, occupying a situation that appeared higher than the town, defended by higher walls, and by a wet ditch of great width and depth: the circumference of the whole was about seven miles; and the walls in all that extent were flanked with bastions, at short intervals, on which were mounted an immense number of guns. Before this magnificent fortress our forces appeared on the tenth of December, 1825, with a *parc* of more than 100 pieces of artillery: during the night, the enemy had cut the embankment of a lake, for the purpose of filling the ditch; a measure of precaution, which had been found very serviceable in 1805; but our troops now arrived in time to repair the breach, before sufficient water had flowed into the fosse to render it impassable; a few days were then spent in reconnoitring the works, and fixing on the best points of attack, until the whole battering train should arrive: desirous, however, of saving women and children from the effects of the terrible bombardment which he knew to be at hand, lord Combermere addressed a letter to Doorjun Sâl, requesting him to

Siege and
capture of
Bhurtpoor.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

send out that inoffensive portion of the inhabitants, and promising them safe conduct: an evasive answer was at first returned, and the request was repeated; but in the true spirit of an Indian tyrant, the usurper ultimately refused his consent. On the twenty-third of December, therefore, every thing being in readiness, the besiegers commenced their first parallel, under a very heavy fire, at the distance of about 800 yards from the north-east angle of the works: on the following morning, three batteries opened on the town, and continued, with several others afterwards erected, so vigorous a fire to the end of the month, that scarcely a roof was left uninjured: such, however, was the depth and tenacity of the mud walls, that cannon shot had very little effect on them; so that, on the third of January, 1826, miners were employed; but their first attempt failed, and a second was met by a counter-mine, when our men were driven away before they had advanced many feet; on the fourteenth also, a mine under one of the bastions, being lighted too hastily, failed of its effect, and occasioned some delay: his lordship, however, directed two others to be driven under the same bastion, which were fired on the sixteenth, and, with the aid of a day's cannonade, effected such a breach, that the result of the enterprise appeared no longer doubtful. Early in the morning of the eighteenth, the troops destined for the assault established themselves in the advanced trenches, unperceived by the enemy; and the explosion of a mine, loaded with 12,000 pounds of powder, under the north-east angle, was to be the signal of attack: at eight o'clock, this subterranean chamber of death was fired, and the effect was terrific: the ground trembled, as if agitated by an earthquake; and after it had heaved up with several convulsive throes, out burst the volcano: the whole of the salient angle, and a stone cavalier in its rear, were lifted into the air, which for some time was in total darkness: at length, the clouds of dust rolled away like billows in a storm; and the proud bastion, with 300 men, were seen precipitated below. Immediately, the two grand divisions of our

army rushed up to the breaches, opposed by the besieged with all their implements of war, and their sabres flashing in the morning sun; but the foremost were soon laid low by British bayonets; and the rest, giving way, were chased along the ramparts: whenever they came to a gun which they could move, they turned it against their pursuers, but were immediately bayoneted, and the gun was upset: in two hours, the whole rampart, though bravely defended, was in our possession; and early in the afternoon the citadel surrendered. Brigadier-general Sleigh, commanding the cavalry, made such a disposition of his troops, that he succeeded in capturing Doorjun Sâl, who, with his wife, two sons, and 160 chosen horsemen, attempted to escape. The garrison consisted of 36,000 troops, of all arms, near 10,000 of whom are said to have fallen during the siege: our own loss was about 1200 men; many of whom were killed by the explosion of the great mine, from which the commander-in-chief himself had a narrow escape; two sepoys being destroyed by the descending masses within a few feet of his lordship.

The fortifications of Bhurtpoor were now demolished by orders from government: the principal bastions were blown up on the sixth of February; and it was left for the rains to complete the ruin: all the other fortresses in the rajah's dominions surrendered; the rightful prince was reinstated in his authority; and the inhabitants returned to their abodes and to their allegiance. For this brilliant achievement, which preserved the tranquillity of our Indian empire, lord Combermere was raised to the rank of viscount, and afterwards made colonel of the first regiment of life guards: the governor-general, on account of the success of the Bhurtpoor siege and the Burmese war, was raised to the dignities of viscount Holmsdale, and earl Amherst of Arracan.

Little more remains to be said of lord Amherst's administration: in 1827, his lordship, attended by lady Amherst, made an extensive voyage of inspection up the Ganges, receiving homage and entertainments

CHAP.
LXIII.
1823-28.

Departure
of lord
Amherst.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1823-28.

Arrival
of lord
Bentinck.

from tributary rajahs, princes, and kings: he returned to Calcutta early in the ensuing year, and on the eighth of March embarked for England. At the Cape of Good Hope, where he landed, he met his successor, lord William Bentinck, who carried with him to India the character of an enlightened statesman and energetic officer: the measures, however, which have been adopted under his government for unshackling the press, afford much matter for argument and speculation: whether a free press, though incompatible with an evil despotism, be compatible with a despotic government under its mildest and most equitable form, still remains to be proved: the experiment is in progress, and we may hope at least that it will be justified by success.

CHAPTER LXIV.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1825.

Meeting of parliament—Bill for the suppression of unlawful associations in Ireland—Catholic relief bill—Its failure in the house of lords—Speech of the duke of York, and his great popularity with the high-church party—Legal reforms—Increased salary of the judges—Unitarian marriage-act—Act against combinations among workmen—Free trade system—Corn laws—Financial statements—Close of session—Great commercial panic—Domestic events—Review of foreign relations—Opening of the session of 1826—Means adopted for the restoration of commercial confidence—Modification of the corn laws—Debates on restrictions of foreign manufactures—State of finances—Criminal code—State of the colonies—Scotch representation—Removal of attainders—Dissolution of parliament—Dissensions in the cabinet—Violence of parties at the general election—Meeting of the new parliament—Indemnity bill—Vigor of Mr. Canning's policy in Portugal—Capture of Missolonghi—Opening of the Menai bridge—Death of the duke of York—Duke of Wellington commander-in-chief—Catholic question—Illness of lord Liverpool—Dissolution of the cabinet—Appointment of Mr. Canning as premier.

THE sixth session of the existing parliament was opened by commission on the third of February, when the speech took a pleasing view of all our affairs, foreign and domestic, except those relating to Ireland, which have never yet given unalloyed satisfaction to any administration. The spirit developed in the proceedings of the catholic association could not fail to excite alarm in ministers; but as they were conscious that public opinion would not permit the enactment of a partial law against that body, while Orange societies were tolerated in all their violence, a bill was introduced by Mr. Goulburn, 'to amend the

Meeting of
parliament.

CHAP.
LXIV.
1825.

acts relating to unlawful associations in Ireland.' To resist this measure, opposition put forth all its strength; which produced an earnest debate, extended by adjournment through four nights: the chief interest imparted to it lay in Mr. Canning's eloquent vindication of himself against the insinuations of those who considered him estranged from the catholic cause. After reviewing the various incidents of his public life, he observed;—'I have thus shown, that in 1812 I refused office rather than enter into an administration pledged against the catholic question: I did this at a time when office would have been dearer to me than at any other period of my political career; when I would have given ten years of life for two of office; not on account of any sordid or selfish purpose of aggrandisement, but for other and higher views. Nor is this the only sacrifice I have made to the catholic cause: from the earliest dawn of my public life, aye, from the first visions of youthful ambition,—that ambition was directed to one object, before which all others vanished comparatively into insignificance: that object, far beyond all the blandishments of power, beyond all the rewards and favors of the crown, was to represent in this house the university at which I was educated. I had a fair chance of accomplishing it, when the catholic question crossed my path: I was warned, fairly and kindly warned, that my adoption of that cause would blast my prospect: I adhered to the catholic cause, and forfeited all my long-cherished hopes and expectations; yet I am told that I have made no sacrifice! that I have postponed the cause of the catholics to views and interests of my own!' Mr. Canning then, in a high tone of feeling and language, congratulated Mr. Peel, who had attained to that academical distinction which he himself had coveted so eagerly; little dreaming, when he prayed that it might 'long prove a source of reciprocal pride to their parent university, and her representative,' how near the time was at hand, when even this champion of protestant ascendancy would be rejected by his Alma Mater as one of the most reprobate of her

sons! Mr. Goulburn's bill was finally carried by large majorities; but the catholic association, though it yielded to legal authority, and became defunct, was soon resuscitated under a different form: ostensibly regulating itself according to the late act, it disclaimed all religious exclusions, oaths, powers of acting in redress of grievances, and correspondence with dependent societies: thus evading the recent enactments, and concealing its intentions under the mask of charitable purposes, it pursued its original designs with impunity. So little was the question of emancipation considered to be involved in this concerning the association, that many of its warmest advocates voted in favor of the late act: indeed, after it had passed, the friends of emancipation determined to put forth still stronger efforts; accordingly, sir Francis Burdett brought forward a plan, in which the principal bill for the removal of civil disabilities was accompanied by two others, in derision termed 'its wings:' of these, one proposed to enact a state provision for the Roman-catholic clergy, the other to raise the Irish franchise from forty shillings to ten pounds; the former being meant as a security to the state, the latter as a protection to Irish protestants against the overwhelming majority of catholics at elections: the principal bill passed the commons with majorities increasing in its several stages; but its ultimate fate was clearly foreseen before it reached the lords; for on the twenty-fifth of April, between the second and third readings in the lower house, the duke of York took occasion, in presenting a petition against it from the dean and chapter of Windsor, to utter his memorable speech, asserting—that the concession of the catholic claims was repugnant not only to the king's coronation oath, but to the principles of our constitution; and declaring that, 'to the last moment of his life, whatever might be his situation, he would oppose them, so help him God.' Such a declaration, from the heir presumptive to the throne, was viewed by one party as a very unconstitutional proceeding; but by the other it was extolled, as the most manly, patriotic, and noble ex-

CHAP.
LXIV.

1825.

Catholic
relief bill.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1825.

pression of sentiment that could be delivered at a critical moment: it was accordingly printed in letters of gold; was hung up in the houses of zealous protestants; and became the very watchword of the party: being supposed also to express the sentiments of the reigning sovereign,¹ it exercised a strong influence on the votes of those who were expectants of court favor; so that when the emancipation bill was brought up to the peers, it was thrown out by a majority of 178 to 130. The 'wings,' after this failure, were of course abandoned; and as popular feeling repudiated the principle on which they rested, Mr. O'Connell, who in the first instance had consented to force a state annuity on the Roman priesthood, and to disfranchise the forty shilling freeholders, made a public recantation of his errors, and 'asked pardon of God and his country.' The committee on the general condition of Ireland, which was re-appointed by the lords at the opening of the session, made its report; and the evidence produced of the misery existing in that misgoverned and unfortunate country, plainly showed that it could not long remain in such a state.

None of those great questions of constitutional law, which, in times of distress, were represented as involving the very existence of the state, came under discussion this year: parliamentary reform, with its kindred topics, was also left unnoticed; while the legislature attended more to changes in the administration of justice, and of those laws which affect the civil relations between man and man: above all, improvement was sought in the court of chancery, a tribunal, superior to all others in the practical efficacy of its operations, in the comprehensive extent of its range, and in the enlarged principles on which it acts. The courts of common law may be called excellent within their own sphere; but if their doctrines and forms were not modified by equitable jurisdiction, they would in many instances cease to be instruments of

¹ This supposition was quite correct. On the 23rd of May, lord Eldon writes thus to his daughter—'I saw the king yesterday, who is much better, and not a little relieved in point of anxiety by the vote on the catholic question.'—*Life of Lord Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 554.

justice: they look only at so much of a transaction as falls within their arbitrary definitions: though there may be circumstances, not comprehended in such definitions, which intirely alter its nature, yet a court of law cannot look at them; and it deals with the matter in hand, as if that little portion of it, which is included in a legal definition, embraced all particulars of the case: even where a court of law is by its principles permitted to view the whole of an action, it is often incapable, by reason of its forms, to do essential justice; as might be instanced in matters of accounts, the easiest of all subjects submitted to a court of equity, but which can hardly ever be settled in any other; and are generally referred to arbitration: on the contrary, nothing is too complex for the court of chancery, the duty of which is to deal with human transactions as it finds them; not substituting for realities narrow definitions, but examining all their details, and judging of them by the application of a system of principles built up through successive ages of talent and laborious improvement: besides, the court of chancery exercises functions very different from the mere determination of litigated rights, particularly in the guardianship of property, where, from the mode in which it is often limited in a refined state of society, partial interests come successively into existence throughout a long period, before there exists an absolute owner: from the vast variety, therefore, and complicated nature of the transactions with which this court deals, as well as from the enlarged principles on which it acts, it would be surprising if there were not parts in its machinery requiring improvement; and if any set of men, from pure motives, and with adequate knowledge of the subject, had devoted themselves to the task of ascertaining what alterations might be advantageously and prudently made in the forms and practice of equitable jurisdiction, they would have merited the highest applause as public benefactors: the subject, however, unhappily fell into the hands of *Nisi prius* lawyers, who were not well acquainted with its details,

CHAP.
LXIV.

1825.

and who from motives of political hostility seemed to make it an engine for assailing the character of the lord chancellor. In legal knowledge and sagacity, in patient investigation and impartial adjudication, probably no man superior to lord Eldon ever held the great seal of England; but the very nature of his mind,—particularly, that large and comprehensive perception of analogies, which he eminently possessed, led him into habits of hesitation, doubt, and indecision, which delayed proceedings in his court, until the miserable suitors were too often driven utterly to despair: also the life he had led from early youth, addicted solely to legal studies, and abstracted from the ameliorating influence of general society, caused him to adhere pertinaciously to existing institutions, and to oppose the introduction of innovation into any system with which he was connected: never did his prejudices relax so far as to suffer, without a shock, the approach of a correcting hand even to abuses which he had himself in his earlier days denounced: the bankrupt laws he had declared to be the disgrace of our country; ‘little more than a stock in trade for commissioners, assignees, and solicitors:’ the complicated procedure of his own court had also fallen under his severest reprehension; but he suffered these and all other abuses to flourish, without ever suggesting, or even tolerating, a remedy: those who praise him, very deservedly, for his many estimable qualities and virtues, his talents and industry, his wisdom and learning, would find it difficult to point out a triumph over abuses achieved by his great and splendid faculties. As his legal prejudices were even surpassed by those which fettered him on all questions of international policy or domestic administration; and as he was thought, in his distribution of professional honors and emoluments, to overlook those whose political opinions were obnoxious to him; he drew on himself attacks from disappointed men, whose irritated feelings led them to wound the judge through the court over which he presided: hence, it can be no matter of surprise that they were found ignorant in the very prac-

tices which they denounced, or unable to provide suitable remedies when invited to propose them. A commission of inquiry, which had been appointed last year, and had not yet made its report, produced no suspension of hostilities; but, on the contrary, became in its turn a theme of severe abuse.

Two discussions on the subject took place this session; the first introduced by Mr. J. Williams, who, in presenting some petitions complaining of particular proceedings in chancery, delivered a long and sarcastic speech, in which he attacked the whole law of England; while that of real property, of which however he declared himself ignorant, was the object of his peculiar animadversion. On the seventh of June, sir Francis Burdett brought the subject again under discussion, by moving, that the evidence taken by the commission, instituted to investigate the practice of the court of chancery, be printed. Mr. Peel opposed the motion, because to print such evidence, without any accompanying report, was contrary to the practice of the house; and even if it were printed, the session was too far advanced for the introduction of any measure relating to it: during the discussion which ensued, sir M. W. Ridley seriously deprecated the attacks made night after night on the lord chancellor, who, he was persuaded, stood very high in the estimation of the British people: Mr. Brougham, however, did not profit by advice; but quitting that commendable spirit of moderation which he had for some time pursued, broke forth into a vehement attack on lord Gifford, deputy speaker of the house of lords, who had been distinguished by the patronage of the chancellor: the motion was rejected by a majority of 154 to 73: nevertheless it appears that an order moved by sir F. Burdett was placed on the journals of the commons, June the thirtieth; 'that there be laid before that house a list of all causes which have been heard by the lord chancellor during the last eighteen years, wherein judgment has not yet been given, specifying the time when heard; comprising all petitions in cases of bankruptcy already heard but not decided.' This order

CHAP.
LXIV.

1825.

was passed without a word of observation; and occasioned so much annoyance to Lord Eldon that he was with some difficulty prevailed on to continue in office, Lord Liverpool assuring him that the motion would drop with the session, and must be renewed to be of any force.²

The chancellor of the exchequer at this time brought forward a measure for augmenting the salaries of the judges; which, while it provided that fees should no longer form a part of their emoluments, prohibited the sale of those offices which the chiefs of the respective courts had been allowed so to dispose of: at first, it was proposed to grant the puisne judges £6000 a year; but the scheme ultimately adopted gave to the chief justices of the king's bench and common pleas respectively £10,000 and £8000; to the chief baron of the court of exchequer £7000; and to each of the other judges £5500; while the retiring pensions of all were increased: the whole of this arrangement met with very illiberal opposition; for how few men bring so much talent, and give up so much time, to the public service! how few sacrifice so largely the profits of a lucrative profession, as the judges of our land! The unitarian marriage act, though supported by the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Lichfield, and lord Liverpool, being opposed by the lord chancellor, was again rejected; so also was lord Holland's motion for the second reading of a bill for altering the law of attainder and corruption of blood, both the principle and the imperfection of its details appearing objectionable to that high legal officer: a similar fate attended Mr. serjeant Onslow's bill for the repeal of our usury laws; though Mr. C. Wynne stated, that not only himself, but the chancellor of the exchequer, the president of the board of trade, and most of the cabinet ministers, were favorable to their abolition.

Many mischievous effects having arisen from the passing of an act proposed by Mr. Hume, which repealed both the statute and common law against combinations among workmen, Mr. Huskisson called

² Life of Lord Eldon, vol. ii. p. 564.

attention to this subject, and detailed some painful reports regarding it, which had been forwarded to the home secretary: as a general principle, he admitted, that every man had an inherent right to carry his own labor to the best market, since labor was the poor man's capital; but, on the other hand, he as strenuously contended for the perfect freedom of those who gave employment to that labor; whose property, machinery, and capital ought equally to be protected: having shown the very injurious operation of the present system, he moved for a select committee, whose report soon led to a repeal of the act.

CHAP.
LXIV.
1825.

It had long been matter of doubt, whether the restraints which confined the trade of our colonies to the mother country, subject to regulations made solely with a view to the advantage of the latter, were not, in fact, injurious to both; and some steps in relaxation of the system had been already taken: but at this time, Mr. Huskisson undertook the responsibility of bringing the whole subject before the legislature, braving the clamors of those, whose prejudices might remain unsubdued by the force of his statements, and the nature of his facts. The alterations which he proposed in our colonial system, were explained in a very elaborate speech on the twenty-third of March; when, by entering into historical details, he proved that all those articles of manufacture which had been most fostered, had most languished; that excessive duties made the smuggler's fortune, while the manufacturer was disappointed, and the exchequer defrauded; that the apprehension which guarded our fabrics with high duties was unfounded; and that the true policy of the state, as well as the advantage of individuals, would be consulted, by reducing those duties sufficiently to countervail whatever might be imposed on raw material used in the different manufactories. Having first shown the very ungrateful return made to this country by the United States of America, which had been allowed to trade with our colonies in their own vessels, he proposed to open the colonial ports to all friendly powers, on the same principle, though with some

Free-trade
system.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1825.

modifications, as that on which they now traded with Jersey or Ireland: he was also anxious to encourage our own commerce, and that of our colonies, with the countries of South America, by extending to certain colonial ports the benefits and regulations of the warehousing or bonding system: another boon, intended for the colonies and their trade, was the abolition of large fees levied in almost all their ports, for the benefit of public officers: he also recommended two alterations of a local and specific nature; one lowering the duty on sugar, imported from the Mauritius, to the same rate as that from the West Indies; the other admitting, at all times, an importation of corn from Canada, on payment of a fixed and moderate duty. The resolutions embodying these propositions were unanimously adopted, with one trifling exception; the bill, permitting importation of corn from Canada at a duty of five shillings, being limited in its operation to a period of two years.

On the twenty-fifth, Mr. Huskisson brought forward the other parts of his scheme for promoting commerce, by a diminution of duties imposed with a view to protection rather than to revenue, and for affording relief to our shipping and navigation interests. He began by proposing a reduction of duties on the cotton and woollen trade, as well as those on manufactured linen, which in some cases rose as high as 180 per cent.; but which he proposed to lower to ten, fifteen, and twenty-five per cent. respectively: he next adverted to foreign paper, books, and glass, which were almost prohibited by excessive duties; also to metallic substances, particularly iron, copper, zinc, and lead: he then proceeded to consider how far it was possible to reduce certain imposts on raw materials, which interfered with the success of our capitalists, who were obliged to use them in their manufactures; instancing the cases of articles employed in dying, as well as oil expressed both from olives and from rape seed: the duty on this latter he wished to take off altogether, and thus enable the manufacturer to supply the farmer with cake, instead of compelling him to procure it at

a large cost in the foreign market: he also proposed to reduce the duty on all foreign wool, imported at a lower price than a shilling the pound, to one halfpenny. He concluded with some measures tending to relieve the commerce and navigation of this country: there was already a bill on the table to do away with quarantine duties, which the committee on foreign trade had equitably proposed to lay on the community at large: farther measures which he contemplated were, the abolition of all fees on commerce with our colonies; and the removal of duty payable on the transfer of any share in a ship, or of a whole ship, from one person to another. There was still another mode in which the shipping interest might be benefitted; and that consisted in a reduction of stamps for bonds, required from exporters of certain goods to be delivered at certain places, from forty shillings to four shillings: he would also apply the same principle to custom-house debentures, or documents given by way of security, to those who were intitled to drawbacks: as conducive to the same end, he proposed an improvement in the lax system of our consular establishments; granting, instead of fees, a regular salary to their superintending officers. Though several members expressed an apprehension that such extensive changes in our commercial system might be injurious, Mr. Huskisson's propositions were generally commended by parliament, and by the country at large: the resolutions in which they became embodied were adopted without a dissentient voice; and were afterwards carried into execution by bills framed accordingly. Connected with these changes, was the surrender of its charter by the Levant company, established in the reign of James I., and endowed with very considerable privileges.

In May, the secretary for foreign affairs laid on the table of the house of commons three important state papers: the first was a treaty of commerce with the independent states of the Rio de la Plata; the second was a treaty concluded with Russia by Mr. Stratford Canning, during his mission to St. Petersburg, in

CHAP.
LXIV.
1825.

which that rising diplomatist had settled, in a satisfactory manner, disputed claims existing between the two countries, with regard to territories on the north-west coast of America, as well as to certain rights of trade and navigation in the Pacific Ocean: the third was a treaty between Great Britain and Sweden, having for its object an abolition of the slave trade, as carried on by the subjects, or under the flag, of either nation. The effectual measure of visitation and detention—a measure proudly, meanly, and pertinaciously resisted by France—was with a frank and manly policy acceded to by Sweden; so that the cruisers of either power, under certain limitations, were permitted to stop, and bring in for adjudication, slave vessels trading under their respective flags: these limitations, indeed, restricted the exercise of the right to a small number of vessels on both sides, and in many other particulars guarded cautiously against the abuse of it: but as this right could not exist at all, in time of peace, except by virtue of a treaty, Mr. Canning, in obtaining the recognition of so important a principle, rendered great service to the cause of humanity.

The fluctuations of price in the corn market, and the distress attendant on them, since the period when the averages that were to regulate importation had been fixed, brought this complex question again before parliament: Mr. Huskisson declared himself favorable to a revision of the whole subject; he never had supposed that the former law could be permanent; for the policy of it must necessarily be viewed in relation to changes in the growth and price of corn abroad, as well as at home: it was also to be considered, that when we excluded grain, other nations would retaliate by excluding manufactures; a state of things, not to be desired by a country so essentially manufacturing and commercial as Great Britain: at the same time, in legislating on the admission of foreign corn, it was fit that the landed interest should not be overlooked: when it was said that our manufactures were no longer protected, and that corn therefore should be free, the argument was not applicable; because the latter was

grown cheaper abroad, the former were produced cheaper at home, and therefore not subject, like the other, to be brought down by unrestrained importation. The motion for a committee on the corn laws, proposed by Mr. Whitmore, was not carried.

CHAP.
LXIV.
1825.

As our finances continued to improve, and the surplus exceeded by nearly £1,000,000 the estimate of the preceding year, taxes were lowered on various articles, directly and indirectly, to the amount of £1,500,000: the relief, with one exception,—a diminution of duties on ardent spirits,—was judiciously applied: the imposts reduced were on hemp, coffee, wines, British spirits and rum, cider, and those articles in the assessed taxes which pressed particularly on the lower classes of society: after these arrangements, Mr. Robinson still calculated the gross revenue of the current year at £56,444,375, and the expenditure, including the interest of the debt, with the sinking fund, at rather more than £56,000,000: his speech on this occasion was eloquent, and his anticipations sanguine; and though some parties were dissatisfied, because there was not a greater diminution of direct taxation, others because greater relief was not given to West Indian interests, and some because the duties on tobacco were not lowered; yet altogether his financial statements and proposals were received with approbation, and his estimates for the year voted with little opposition: the session, therefore, was brought to a very harmonious conclusion; and on the sixth of July, parliament was prorogued by commission, under the appearance of extraordinary prosperity; but the illusion was soon to be dissipated, and all the golden prospects of the chancellor of the exchequer to vanish like a dream.

The causes of this sudden and unexpected reverse of fortune are now to be investigated. The vast abundance of capital, and consequent low rate of profit, during the last three years, had greatly promoted the increase of manufactures for exportation; and as country banks continued in full operation, this apparent prosperity of manufactures attracted to them

Financial
statements.

Great
commer-
cial panic.

CHAP.
LXIV.
1825.

much capital; whilst a system of credit was generated which caused a still farther extension: speculation at the same time added its impulse to this system; until, in the course of the present year, paper money, of various kinds, thrown into circulation, increased the quantity of currency beyond what the causes determining our supply of gold could sustain: the exchanges turned against us; the currency became depreciated; and gold began to flow out of the country. The Bank of England, finding that the demand for gold diminished its stock of coin, contracted its issue of notes; and in this way, if the state of trade had been good, the currency might have been reduced sufficiently to restore the exchanges to par, leaving us with our natural quantity: but the reduction in quantity took place first among those who had pushed their credit to the utmost: these parties were consequently rendered incapable of meeting their engagements, and became bankrupts: speculation, or over-trading, being very general, the failure of some alarmed others; those who had given credit pressed their debtors for payment; goods were sacrificed to make it; prices came down, alarm increased, and ruin seemed impending over all. At this time, the three per cent. consols fell from eighty-two to seventy-five; and, so difficult was it to get money which would be received, that interest was given, in some instances, for temporary loans, at a rate equal to fifty per cent. per annum: country bank notes were extensively driven from circulation; and the directors of the bank, being in better credit, put out a large additional amount; yet they were nearly drained of coin; and, if their stock had been quite exhausted, a new restriction must have taken place, or the whole mass of Bank of England notes would have been, as it were, annihilated: in that case, as coin could not have been procured immediately, we should have been reduced to a state of barter. On the authority of Mr. Huskisson, it is stated, that a run on the bank for another forty-eight hours would have actually brought us to that alarming condition.

These evil effects arose out of the system, which

allowed companies, or individuals, to create paper money to any extent, and push it into circulation; the only check being their liability to pay their paper in gold; a check, which the events of this period showed to be no adequate security against an almost annihilation of the common instrument of exchange. Neither the amount of taxes, nor the high rate of rent, nor low rate of profit, had any necessary connexion with this extraordinary derangement of commercial affairs; but it resulted from speculation, aided by a vicious system of making paper money, which improperly increased the quantity of currency, drove gold out of the country, and then caused a general demand for it in exchange for paper, which demand could not be met: the consequence was an almost general breaking up of those who depended on this paper, and an approach to the annihilation of paper money.

Joint-stock companies, in whose schemes a sum of more than £17,500,000 had been subscribed, and which, in the plenitude of their imaginary power, would have contracted to throw a bridge across the channel, or make a tunnel to the antipodes, came for the most part into the gazette, without a solvent subscriber, or an available shilling; and, toward the end of the year, several London banks stopped payment: the agitation in the city became extreme; and, at length, a general alarm, or, as it was termed, a panic ensued: all hastened to draw their money from the bankers, thus forwarding the very catastrophe which they dreaded; and more than seventy country banks either totally failed, or were compelled to suspend their payments, before the consternation had subsided: this violent stoppage of all ordinary channels of credit, and the consequent cessation of business, exercised a strong reaction on the trading and manufacturing interests; so that the year 1825 closed in more alarming convulsions of the mercantile world than this nation had ever witnessed. Both the government and the bank came with laudable promptitude to the relief of the public: an extraordinary coinage of gold was expedited; a new issue of one and two pound notes was poured into

CHAP.
LXIV.

1825.

Domestic
events.

the country to supply the deficiency of circulation caused by provincial failures; and commercial meetings were encouraged to pass resolutions for the support of national credit; by which means the progress of alarm was checked, and public confidence in some degree restored.

In March this year Mr. Brunel commenced his extraordinary undertaking to construct a tunnel under the Thames at Rotherhithe, a work which more than all others, executed in this country, attracts the attention of foreigners; and on the fifteenth of June the first stone of the new London Bridge was laid by John Garratt, esq., lord mayor, in the presence of the duke of York, attended by Mr. John Rennie, its eminent architect. The failure of so many companies put a short stop to the general scheme for improvements in London, though several were projected: last year, the plan of Macadamising the principal streets and squares commenced; but it was now found, that where there was a very heavy and constant draught, such a system was not practicable. This year, a second grand festival was held in York cathedral, when the receipts amounted to the immense sum of £20,200, and the expenditure to £11,000:³ but of the surplus, £6000 was destined for the erection of a grand concert room, and the remainder was distributed among the city and county hospitals. One of the most extraordinary instances of accumulation ever known was made public in the accounts of the Equitable Life Assurance Company; for its vested capital, in the month of June, was as follows:—

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Three per cents. | . | . | . | . | . | £9,650,000 |
| Three and a half ditto | . | . | . | . | . | 430,000 |
| On mortgage | . | . | . | . | . | 952,000 |
| | | | | | | <hr/> £11,032,000 |

Of this immense property, no less than £8,718,108 had accumulated in the period between December, 1804, and June, 1825. On the sixteenth of August,

³ At the first meeting of this kind the sum collected was £16,174, the expenditure was £8809, and £7200 was given to the charities.

the first steam vessel to India, the *Enterprise*, captain Johnston, R. N., left Falmouth, reaching the Cape on the thirteenth of October, and arriving at Bengal on the ninth of December: also a new expedition started on a scheme of discovery in Africa, under captain Clapperton. Its enterprising leader died at Soccatoo in April, 1827; but his papers were preserved by his faithful attendant, Richard Lander; who, with his brother, had afterwards the glory of solving the long doubtful problem respecting the course of the Niger.

In March, a grand entertainment was given to the duke of Wellington by noblemen and gentlemen connected with the commerce of our metropolis, for the purpose of presenting his grace with a magnificent vase, of the value of 1100 guineas, in testimony of his transcendent services; ‘not (as the inscription remarked) in the presumptuous hope of extending the glory of a name which is imperishable, but to testify their admiration of the last and greatest of his achievements, the battle of Waterloo.’ The duke, in returning thanks for this noble present, without undervaluing the conduct of himself, his officers, and gallant men, attributed the great success of that battle, and of the war, chiefly to the indomitable spirit of the country: with regard to the great victory which was so splendidly noticed, he very justly characterised it as one, ‘that had produced consequences unheard of, as the result of any event in ancient or modern times; relieving mankind from every apprehension of a return to that horrible, revolting, and degrading tyranny, which had been imposed on almost all the world, but which the people of this country had happily escaped.’

Among the events which took place this year on the continent, that which seemed pregnant with the most important consequences was the death of that amiable man and excellent sovereign, the emperor Alexander; for it appeared capable not only of putting in jeopardy the tranquillity of his empire, but of changing the whole course of its foreign policy: the event, however, was not felt beyond the limits of

Review
of foreign
relations.

CHAP.
LXIV.
1825.

Russia. The grand duke Constantine, a brutal man, who had renounced his right of inheritance on occasion of his marriage with a Polish lady, adhered to his pledge; and though a conspiracy exploded at St. Petersburg, under pretence of forcing the crown upon him, it was defeated by the grand duke Nicholas, who succeeded to the throne, professing a determination to pursue steadily that course of policy which had been adopted by his predecessor. France was occupied in the coronation of its bigoted and infatuated monarch, who soon proved the truth of Napoleon's expression concerning him and his race, 'that they had learned nothing, and had forgotten nothing, in their adversity.' His coronation at Rheims, on the twenty-ninth of May, exhibited a degree of grandeur and parade rivalling that of Napoleon at Paris: but what a difference in the attendants on those memorable scenes! In one instance the sun shone upon the eagles of the empire; upon glittering cuirasses and polished helmets, the bright array of those bold men who aimed at establishing French dominion over the prostrate nations of the world: in the other were seen the banners of the church; and gold-embroidered robes covering the bended forms of saint-like figures, who meditated in their secret hearts the establishment of a spiritual tyranny over France itself, in comparison with which that of Robespierre himself might have been accounted a blessing! The British envoys sent to this gorgeous ceremony were the duke of Northumberland, lord Granville, and sir George Naylor, who invested, though he could not ennoble, Charles X. with the order of the garter.

Sweden, Denmark, and Germany remained without much alteration of circumstances, except that some members of the holy alliance, who had nearly renounced all intercourse with Wirtemberg, as not being sufficiently friendly to their principles, renewed their diplomatic relations with that power: Russia and Austria again sent ambassadors to Stutgard, professing to have forgiven the king's lapse of judgment in favoring the principles of constitutional government.

Unhappy Spain was not only dishonored by the presence of foreign troops, but distracted by all the miseries of factions, revolts, and changes of administration; nor were there many of its cities, whose prisons were not filled with persons implicated in, or suspected of rebellion: at this period, however, the king seemed, by comparison, to have assumed a new character, and to appear as a protector of the liberal party: the prisoners, on the present occasion, were ultra-royalists, monks, and priests, who, thirsting for the blood of constitutionalists, gave out that 'the beloved Ferdinand' himself was a freemason; and that the object of all good Spaniards should be to place on the throne the infant Don Carlos, whose excellent principles and sincere catholicism were well known. In Portugal, principally through the influence of the British and French ambassadors, the king was induced to recognise the independence of Brazil; the sovereignty of which he ceded to his eldest son, Don Pedro: after this preliminary step, the proffered mediation of Great Britain between the two states was accepted; and sir Charles Stuart visited Rio Janeiro to negotiate a treaty between the mother country and the new transatlantic empire: the interior state, however of Brazil was much disturbed by the tyrannical and imprudent conduct of its new emperor; and war also commenced between Brazil and the republic of Buenos Ayres. In Italy all was tranquil, and the Austrian government proceeded in its usual routine; kind and paternal as long as its subjects yielded implicit obedience to its dictates, and totally discarded politics from their imagination. With regard to the papal states, the administration of Leo XII. was distinguished by a superior degree of bigotry; and in Naples, the old king, who died on the fourth of January, was succeeded by his present majesty; when many persons, who had been exiled on account of their share in the Neapolitan revolution, received permission to return. The relations between Turkey and Russia still continued in a very ambiguous and critical state; though no steps were

CHAP.
LXIV.
1825.

CHAP.
LXIV.
1826.

taken toward hostilities on either side. During the winter, the Greeks had been more occupied by internal dissensions than by efforts to meet their barbarous foes; who, on the contrary, had made all possible preparations for a vigorous campaign: the most important feature in this was the Egyptian expedition under Ibrahim Pasha, step-son to Mahomet Ali, pasha of Egypt; who, having landed in the Morea, with a formidable force, trained by European discipline, soon reduced the city of Navarino: in western Greece, the Turks invested Missolonghi, where lord Byron, the zealous and disinterested advocate of the Greek cause, died last year. In the United States, Mr. John Quincy Adams was chosen president, against three competitors, by the legislative body, on whom the election devolved; no candidate having had the requisite majority of suffrages among the electors deputed by the States. In South America, the various republics were proceeding to consolidate their power; though Chili was much disturbed, and Paraguay had fallen under the despotic tyranny of Dr. Francia.

Meeting of
parliament.

The commercial affairs of Great Britain were still in a very unsettled state, when parliament assembled in the beginning of February; and the first attention of both houses was naturally directed to existing difficulties, though the greater part of them could receive no remedy but through the lenient hand of time: the hazard of their recurrence, however, might be lessened; accordingly, the house of commons, in pursuance of a recommendation in the speech, to protect public and private interests against sudden fluctuations by placing the currency on a firm foundation, resolved itself into a committee on the bank charter; when a proposition for prohibiting the issue of notes below the value of £5, and withdrawing those in circulation after a period of three years, was brought forward by the chancellor of the exchequer; and being supported by Mr. Brougham, though opposed by Mr. Baring, was carried by a majority of 232 to 89. This resolution to extinguish small notes

in England (for the measure did not extend to Scotland) was followed by two other bills affecting our currency: the first of these, in opposition to what was thought an unjust monopoly of the Bank of England, permitted the number of partners in each country bank to be unlimited;⁴ the second, as a compensation to the bank for such a concession, extended its exclusive privileges to a circle round the metropolis, with a radius of sixty-five miles; and authorised the directors to establish branch banks in different parts of the country. While these measures were in progress, the public distress appeared but little diminished, and there seemed to be a general expectation that government would alleviate it by an issue of exchequer bills: ministers, however, had the firmness and prudence to abstain from any short-sighted and injurious palliatives; though they guaranteed the Bank to an extent of two millions for the purchase of exchequer bills in the money market: the bank itself came to a resolution of lending three millions on direct or collateral security; but the whole of this was not applied for; and the very knowledge that such loans were attainable, had a considerable effect in restoring confidence among the commercial classes. What indeed can destroy the elasticity of a country which possesses such resources as Great Britain, while she is true to herself? Commerce, feeling itself unshackled, soon repaired its losses, discovering new powers, and new provinces; forcing its way not only through European nations, where the ingratitude of those who had recovered their thrones by our assistance repaid us by raising barriers against our trade; but penetrating the most barbarous regions of the earth, while it laid open the mysterious Niger and the distant Irrawaddy to our ships: China lay in the back-ground: yet even she was destined to succumb hereafter to the irresistible spirit of commerce.

The corn laws were again agitated, and a committee was moved for by Mr. Whitmore, to take them into consideration. Mr. Huskisson, on being

Modifica-
tion of
corn laws.

⁴ Previous to this time, it could not exceed six.

CHAP.
LXIV.
— 1826.

referred to more particularly, as having in the preceding session pledged himself to a revision of these enactments, maintained that the pledge was qualified; that the present was not a fit time for such an undertaking, though he had every reason to suppose that during next year this subject might with propriety be brought before the house; in which case, he was most anxious to give it a serious and dispassionate consideration: but though the arrangement of our corn laws thus remained unsettled, it was found necessary, before the end of the session, to introduce two bills for modifying their strict operation. There was at present but little diminution of public distress; and its continued pressure led to a series of disgraceful riots in Lancashire, where the vengeance of the mob was furiously directed against machinery, especially power looms, under a notion that these were the great cause of their want of employment. The people acted from ignorance; but this ignorance had been stimulated by a state of suffering approaching almost to starvation, which no local subscriptions could relieve: as therefore, in the ports of Hull, Liverpool, and some others, there were about three thousand quarters of bonded wheat, it was supposed that the liberation of this might diminish the extent of suffering, while it would have no material effect on the agricultural interests: Mr. Canning therefore brought forward a proposition to allow bonded corn to come into the market. Again, as it was impossible to foretell the result of the ensuing harvest, (and from the general aspect of the crops fears were entertained on this point) it was also proposed, as a measure of precaution, to vest in government, during the recess, a power of permitting foreign grain to be imported, on payment of a fixed duty. Both measures were carried, after a strong opposition: but in the second case, the quantity of corn admissible, instead of being indefinite, was limited to 500,000 quarters; and the period to two months from the opening of the ports.

Debates on
free trade.

In 1824, the legislature had begun to act on the principles of free trade, by taking off those restric-

tions which intirely prohibited the importation of foreign silks; and to the bill which permitted their admission with an *ad valorem* duty of thirty per cent., and which was now about to come into operation, a large portion both of masters and workmen referred the present depression of the trade, rather than to causes which did not come so readily within general comprehension: many manufacturers also limited their orders until the effect of this untried system should be somewhat known; while more joined in the outcry raised against it: the truth is, little opposition was made to the measure when it passed; and if other circumstances, which that measure in no way affected, had not created distress, it never would have been decried: a great decay, however, of the trade having taken place, nothing was easier than to ascribe it to the impossibility of our meeting foreign competitors in the market, loaded as we were with taxation and burdens of various kinds: accordingly, numerous petitions were presented from the districts in which silk manufactures were carried on, praying for a repeal, or at least for a modification, of the enactment of 1824. On the twenty-third of February, Mr. Ellice, one of the members for Coventry, moved that these petitions should be referred to a select committee; and the motion led to a debate, which by adjournment continued two evenings: on this occasion, Mr. Huskisson was driven to vindicate the leading part he had taken in the measure referred to; a task, which he executed with eminent ability and success, being ably seconded by Mr. Canning; who, in a speech, interesting not only for its talent, but for the just and generous praise bestowed on his friend, gave utterance to the feelings of vexation and disgust which he and Mr. Huskisson had to endure from the enemies of reason and philosophy; ‘a sect, small in numbers, and powerless in might; who thought that all advances toward improvement were retrogradations toward jacobinism: these persons,’ he said, ‘seem to imagine, that under no possible circumstances can an honest man endeavor to keep his country on a line with the progress of

CHAP.
LXIV.

1826.

political knowlege, and to adapt its course to the varying circumstances of the world: such an attempt is branded as an indication of mischievous intentions, as evidence of a design to sap the very foundations of the country's greatness.' The following passage, however, deserves particular observation, as tending to unmask a set of hypocritical patriots, who strive to maintain their selfish views and miserable prejudices under the shelter of a great name, while they either egregiously misrepresent or completely misunderstand the character of him who bore it. 'It is singular,' said Mr. Canning, 'to remark, how ready some people are to admire in a great man the exception, rather than the rule of his conduct: such perverseness is like the idolatry of barbarous nations, who can see the noonday splendor of the sun without emotion; but when he is eclipsed, come forward with hymns and cymbals to adore him: thus, there are those who venerate Mr. Pitt less in the brightness of his meridian glory, than under his partial obscurations; who gaze on him with the fondest admiration when he has ceased to shine.' Pitt, indeed, was a true philosopher, and no stubborn follower of antiquated precedents. Who can imagine, that, if he had lived, experience would not have corrected many of his views; while the improved state of the world opened his eyes to glorious visions of the future? Mr. Canning, in one of his later speeches, declared, that in applying philosophy to politics, he only carried into effect Pitt's own declarations.

Soon afterwards, Mr. Huskisson was obliged to enter on a defence of the late policy pursued respecting the shipping interest and navigation laws: on which occasion, nothing could be more clear or comprehensive than his exposition of the principles on which the former system was founded, of the changes which had since occurred, and of the consequent necessity of our conformity to those altered circumstances: the whole of our colonial and foreign commerce passed under his review, from the first enactment of the navigation law (12 Charles II.), to the present

period: he proved the necessity, as well as policy, of the various innovations which had from time to time been made on its principle, more especially since the close of the first American war; and to support his statement, he concluded by moving for a variety of returns relative to shipping, tonnage, and men, employed in the merchant service, from the year 1814 to 1825 inclusive.

CHAP.
LXIV.
— 1826. —

On the eighteenth of April, a petition presented to the house of commons from a person confined for a contempt of the court of chancery, was made an opportunity for attacking that court and its head. Mr. Hume declared that the greatest curse which ever fell on any nation was to have such a court, and a judge who perpetuated such a system; and similar language was held on the twenty-first, when the petition of another complainant was presented. In the mean time the chancery commissioners had produced their report, and sir John Copley, then attorney-general, addressed his mind so promptly to the subject, that by the eighteenth of May he had digested a plan, which he opened to the house of commons in a lucid speech, introductory to a bill for regulating the practice of the court: but owing to the lateness of the season, and some other considerations which impeded its progress, this measure was deferred to the following session. Meanwhile ministers set themselves earnestly to work in promoting the objects of the commission, and provided pecuniary means for carrying them into effect, from what is called the suitors' fund. All this meditated disarrangement of his court and system, as well as his favorable inclination toward lord Gifford, would have induced lord Eldon to resign his office, had not the death of that amiable and excellent person, whom he contemplated as his probable successor, intervened in the beginning of September.

Though the financial statement of the chancellor of the exchequer partook of that favorable character which it had sustained for the last three years, he admitted that it would be unsafe to frame his estimates without allowing for some loss in various branches of

Financial
statements.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1826.

revenue, consequent on the present state of public embarrassment; but, after all deductions, he could not reckon the probable produce of the year before him at less than £57,000,000, while he calculated the whole expenditure at £56,328,421. In his speech on this occasion, he enumerated the various taxes reduced since 1816, which amounted to the enormous sum of £27,522,000; yet this, far from diminishing the various sources of revenue, had rather infused into them new energy, and justified his most sanguine expectations: such a declaration, which held out much happier prospects than could have been anticipated, was received by the house with general satisfaction; and the necessary supplies for the year were voted, though not without considerable opposition from Mr. Hume, Mr. Maberly, and some other members, regarding both the management of the national debt, and the amount of the army, navy, and civil estimates.

Alteration
of criminal
code.

Mr. Peel, at this period, applied the powers of his clear and dispassionate mind to the simplification and improvement of our criminal code; purifying it of many barbarous enactments and absurd technicalities, introduced when society differed widely from its present state. An important bill, for amending the law of felony, as well as the administration of criminal justice, was now carried; but another for consolidating and amending the laws relative to larceny, and giving to judges a power of awarding costs to prosecutors in cases of misdemeanor, was, on account of the multiplicity of its details, left for consideration to another session: one clause, which Mr. Lamb endeavored to introduce into the bill, was contested by great names and with much ability on both sides; this was a proposal, which had been already more than once rejected, for allowing counsel to prisoners: the attorney-general, while he admitted that the opinion of the bar, respecting its merits, was divided, felt convinced that its effects would be injurious to the prisoner as well as to justice; for instead of a simple statement and calm examination of facts, we should have all the zeal and struggle for victory, which were usually seen

in civil cases: besides, counsel for the prosecution would always have the benefit of reply whenever a witness was called for the accused person; which might more than counterbalance any favorable effect of evidence: again, if the address of the prisoner's counsel promised to be efficient, the judge would in many cases be compelled to animadvert on it; in doing which he might unconsciously pass the exact boundary that ought to circumscribe his remarks: then the impression would probably go forth, that the verdict of the jury had been elicited by those remarks; and the judge, instead of being, as now, counsel for the prisoner, would be almost compelled to become an advocate against him. On the other side, the absurdity of permitting counsel to start and multiply frivolous and visionary objections to the form and phraseology of an indictment, while they were prohibited from intermeddling with the merits and evidence of their client's case, was placed in a strong light by Mr. H. Twiss: he also displayed the hardship under which a prisoner lay, who, wishing to address the jury on the facts of a case, must do it with his own lips, under all the disadvantages of natural disability, physical impediments, or accidents of his situation; while the very incompetency to do himself justice would be aggravated by a knowledge of the serious consequences attendant on his failure. 'As to the fiction of the judge being his counsel,' said Mr. Twiss, 'it would in most cases be found that he was counsel against the prisoner, and for the prosecutor. Whence came the only instructions which the judge received in any of these cases? from the deposition of witnesses for the prosecution: and sir Robert Atkyns, in his notes on lord Russell's trial, had said,—'I well know by experience what sort of counsel judges usually be for a prisoner.' Usually, indeed, the jury understand the judge's charge as having a tendency to protect the prisoner from wrong; but in that respect, he becomes counsel for the prosecution: barely fair play is not enough for a man, who has for his antagonist a skilful and practised advocate.' Mr. Peel admitted that the

CHAP.
LXIV.

1826.

arguments and opinions on this point were nearly balanced; but since his own experience, and the knowledge acquired from his official situation, led him to think that justice was most satisfactorily administered under the present system, he felt unwilling to risk any change. In the early part of this session, the house was occupied by a case which Mr. Denman had brought before it in the preceding year, relating to an act of great oppression exhibited by Mr. Kenrick, one of the Welsh judges, and a magistrate of Surrey: evidence on the charge was entered into; and Mr. Denman moved, that, as Mr. Kenrick had shown himself an unfit person to exercise the judicial functions, an address be presented to his majesty, praying him to remove that gentleman from the office of judge of the great session of Wales. The manner in which this question was treated by the ministerial part of the house, and in which it was negatived without a division, was no bad argument, in the mind of many unprejudiced persons, *in favor of parliamentary reform.*

State of the
colonies.

In the course of this session, cases of great cruelty and injustice, exercised by owners, magistrates, and judicial courts, against the slaves in our colonies, were brought before parliament, and eloquently exposed, by Mr. Denman, Mr. Brougham, lord Suffield, and others. Instead of the less dilatory methods proposed by these gentlemen for the extinction of slavery, delay and remedial measures were suggested by lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning; the latter of whom declared, that if immediate and hasty steps were taken, our West Indian possessions would be abandoned to a state of savage desolation, of which wild speculators had not the slightest notion: at the same time, he was obliged to confess, that in most of our colonies, the exhortations sent by government for ameliorating the condition of their slaves, had been treated with intolerable neglect and contempt: the previous question, moved by sir T. Acland, was carried by a large majority; and thus the colonial legislatures were still allowed to show how far they were ready, by timely concessions and

purposes of good faith, to avert a direct interference of the mother country in their internal regulations. The session did not pass off without some attempts at a reform of the house of commons made by lord John Russell, in a bill to prevent bribery at elections; by Mr. Abercromby, who wished to amend the representation of Edinburgh; and by sir J. Newport, to disfranchise non-resident freemen in Ireland. Mr. Abercromby's motion was strongly opposed by Mr. Dundas and sir G. Clerk, sitting members for the town and county of Edinburgh; as well as by Mr. Canning, who considered it as intended to undermine those barriers which resisted the inroads of a more wide and sweeping innovation: nor was the unexampled prosperity of Edinburgh, and the contentment which pervaded its population, forgotten to be brought forward, as a convincing proof of the excellence of the old system. Mr. Canning, after expatiating on advantages connected with the Scotch representation, observed, that his objection to the present motion was its application, as a single instance of reform in a borough, to the general question: it was not usual, he said, to make an attack on a single borough, by an allegation of prevailing abuses; but it was quite new to institute a charge against it because its elective franchise was not proportionate to its actual population: this principle, if once admitted, would let in the general question of reform, and lead to endless squabbles: he concluded, however, with an extraordinary expression of his hopes, that the motion would be repeated annually for the innocent gratification of the noble lord (J. Russell) and those who advocated it; little thinking how near that gratification was, and how ample, if not innocent, would be!

Before parliament broke up, measures were taken for the restoration of five Scotch peerages forfeited by rebellion in the last century: the only person who expressed disapprobation regarding these acts of grace, was lord Milton; and he avowed, that his opposition was founded, not on personal grounds, but on political considerations alone: why should not a bill be brought

CHAP.
LXIV.

1826.

in for the restoration of titles against all acts of attainder passed under the present and preceding dynasties? why make a selection of forfeitures incurred for treason, not against the crown, but against the liberties of the subject? He lamented that he had not stated his objections when these bills first made their appearance in the house.

General
election.

This sixth and short session was prorogued by commission on the thirty-first of May; and on the second of June parliament was dissolved. Parties in it had chiefly followed the divisions of the cabinet: the principal of these, under the influence of the lord chancellor, supported every abuse from a dread of change; the minority, at the head of which was Mr. Canning, declared itself favorable to all practicable improvements; while the premier held a middle course between them, agreeing with the first in little else except his repugnance to catholic emancipation, but tempering the ardor of the other by his habitual caution; commanding, however, the respect of both, by his character for moderation and integrity. Each party was held in check by the parliamentary strength of its opponents: the whigs, hopeless of place, were reduced to a necessity of forwarding their principles through the acts of one portion of the cabinet, while the tories naturally supported the other; so that the marks of ancient opposition became almost obliterated, and the only violence exhibited, was in the conduct of a small party of radicals; but the people themselves, forgetting in a great degree political differences, contributed to render this era memorable in our annals. Under such circumstances, the dissolution of parliament did not portend many political changes: the elections were carried on with less animosity than usual; the chief topics on which candidates were tested, being the corn laws and the catholic question. In England, the duke of York's speech, and the violence exhibited in Ireland, had created a strong feeling against the Roman catholics; but in the latter country, their association had re-appeared under a different form; and, being aided by efforts of the priests, who identified themselves

with the lay agitators, it procured the return of a large majority, pledged to support the claims of their papistical constituents. The hostile feelings of the two parties were terribly excited by this conflict: the peasantry, under the spiritual influence of their pastors, generally voted for candidates favorable to emancipation, against their own landlords; many of whom, in return, exercising their right of ejectment, spread misery and indignation far and wide throughout the country: the result of a strongly contested election dispossessed the Beresford family of a seat for the county of Waterford; and this circumstance diffused a joy over Ireland, which almost consoled the sufferers for all their calamities.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1826.

The meeting of parliament, which took place on the fourteenth of November, was hastened by the necessity of obtaining its sanction for a measure, which the state of the harvest had forced on government: toward the end of August, an evident deficiency in the crops caused the prices of grain to rise above the importation limit; but the averages could not be taken, or foreign corn legally brought to market, before the fifteenth of November: ministers, therefore, in this emergency, admitted it on their own responsibility, by an order of council, on the first of September: hence the necessity of a bill of indemnity; which was passed without opposition: about the same time, ministers announced their intention of revising the corn laws, but not before the Christmas recess. The only other measure of importance which occupied attention before that period, was one which eminently signalised Mr. Canning's policy; and exhibited signs of that promptitude and vigor, both in counsel and execution, which once distinguished the immortal Chatham. The state of Portugal, including an attempt made by the execrable Miguel against his father's liberty, if not against his life, and the acknowledgement of Brazilian independence by John VI., under the advice and influence of Great Britain, has been already detailed: during all this time, the French minister at Lisbon, supported by the queen and her faction, labored incessantly to deprive

Meeting
of new
parliament.

Vigor of
Mr. Can-
ning's po-
licy.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1826.

England of its ancient ascendancy in the Portuguese councils; attempting even to occupy the country with French troops drawn from Spain: but he was foiled by the vigor of our government, and the presence of our ships in the Tagus. In the spring of the present year, John VI. died, having appointed his daughter, the infant Isabella Maria, regent, in the name of his eldest son Don Pedro: he however being, by the Brazilian constitution, obliged to make his election between the two crowns, abdicated that of Portugal in favor of his eldest daughter; but, wishing to prevent a disputed succession, and encouraging the incestuous example which had so long disgraced his family, he directed that she should espouse, and share the throne with her uncle Don Miguel: at the same time, to secure the attachment of the liberal party in Portugal, while he conciliated the opposing faction, he re-modelled the ancient institutions of that country into a constitutional or representative form of government; and of this instrument, the British envoy, sir Charles Stuart, was induced to become the bearer, on his return from the Brazilian court. This proceeding indeed of our ambassador was publicly characterised by Mr. Canning as an unauthorised interference; but it was difficult to persuade the world that the new constitution was not framed and promulgated in concert with our government: in Portugal, it was received by the liberals with great joy; but by the absolute party with a virulent hostility, which prompted them to conspire for its overthrow, in order that their favorite, Don Miguel, might ascend the throne: in this design they were openly encouraged by the queen dowager, and covertly by France, that secret promoter of plots and intrigues in all countries where her ambassadors, her consuls, her military or civil officers, her merchants or private citizens reside: hence several Portuguese regiments were persuaded to desert into Spain, where they proclaimed Miguel, and swore allegiance to him as king of Portugal: nor was this proceeding viewed with any displeasure by the Spanish monarch, who was very unwilling to see liberal institutions established in

the vicinity of his realm: the rebels, therefore, were not only sheltered within his territories, but supplied and equipped by his means for the invasion of their own country; and though, in answer to remonstrances made by the Portuguese regency and the British government on this point, he disavowed and condemned the acts of his officers on the frontier; yet the local authorities so systematically persevered in the same course, as to leave no doubt that they acted by instructions from the court of Madrid. With such assistance, the 'absolute party' became so formidable, that the existing government, as well as the constitutional cause, was in imminent danger; and M. de Palmella, Portuguese ambassador in London, applied to our government for military aid, on the faith of ancient treaties: accordingly, on the eleventh of December, ministers brought down a message from the king, recounting the hostile and faithless conduct of Spain, and requesting that parliament would enable his majesty to fulfil his obligations toward the oldest of his allies. The proposal for an address to the throne on this occasion, produced from Mr. Canning a speech, which may be classed among the finest efforts of that distinguished orator: in it, he not only vindicated our interference in affairs of the peninsula, but fully developed the principles of his foreign policy: disclaiming every purpose of interfering in the internal dissensions of Portugal, or influencing the settlement of her domestic institutions, he considered England as merely called on to defend her from invasion organised by foreign aid: after going over the provisions of subsisting treaties to prove this position, he called attention to the present relative state of Portugal and Spain; declaring, that the vote he asked was for the defence of one country, not for aggression against the other: there was still a road open to Spain for retraction and redress; and this would be most readily promoted by the presence of a British army on the territory of our ally. Mr. Canning next went into a detail of events relative to the acquisition of her new constitution by Portugal; disclaiming all interference on

CHAP.
LXIV.
1826.

our part, and explaining the circumstance of its being brought over from Brazil by sir C. Stuart. 'With respect to the character of that constitution,' he observed, 'I do not think it right to offer at present any public opinion; my own I have privately; but, as an English minister, all I wish to say is, may God prosper the attempt made by Portugal to obtain constitutional liberty; and may that nation be as fit to receive and cherish it, as on other occasions she is capable of discharging her duties among European nations!' This sentiment was received by the house with long and continued cheers; after which, he detailed the aggressions of Spain, as well as her motives; expressing an earnest hope, that, on hearing of the step we were about to take, that power would act in such a manner as to render hostilities unnecessary: he had set out by declaring, that nothing short of vindicating our national honor could make him endure a thought of war; but he begged now to be understood, not as dreading war in a good cause, from any distrust of our strength and resources: it was on very different grounds that he dreaded it; it was because he knew that this country possessed a power to push any war, in which she might engage, to consequences, at the bare notion of which he shuddered: our position at this time was not merely one of neutrality between contending nations, but between adverse principles; it was a position, which alone preserved that balance of power which was necessary for the welfare and safety of Europe. 'Nearly four years of experience,' said Mr. Canning, 'have confirmed that opinion; and it is to be feared, that the next contest in Europe, if it should extend beyond the narrow limits of Portugal and Spain, will be a war of the most tremendous nature, because it will be a war of conflicting opinions; and, although this country may enter into it with a desire to mitigate and control its horrors, yet she cannot help seeing under her banners all those who are restless and dissatisfied, with or without cause, in every nation with which she may be placed at variance. The consciousness of this fact,

the knowledge that we possess such a tremendous power, forces me to feel as I now feel: but it is one thing to have a giant's strength, and another to use it like a giant: the consciousness that we have this power keeps us safe: our business is not to seek opportunities of displaying it; but so to keep it, that hereafter the world may see we knew its proper use, while we shrunk from converting the umpire into the oppressor—

CHAP.
LXIV.
1826.

*Celsa sedet Æolus arce,
Sceptra tenens; mollitque animos, et temperat iras:
Ni faciat, maria, ac terras, cœlumque profundum
Quippe ferant rapidi secum, verrantque per auras.*

The consequences of letting loose those passions which are chained up, may be such, as will lead to a scene of desolation which no one can contemplate without horror; and such as I could never lie easy on my couch, if I was conscious of having by one hour precipitated. I would bear much, and forbear long; I would almost put up with any thing that did not touch our national faith and national honor, rather than let slip the furies of war, when we know not whom they may reach, and where the devastation may end: such is the love of peace which the British government acknowledges, and such the duty of peace which the circumstances of the world inculcate. In obedience to this conviction, and with the hope of avoiding extremities, I will push no farther the topics of this part of the address: let us defend Portugal, whoever may be the assailants, because it is a work of duty; and let us end where that duty ends: we go to Portugal, not to rule, not to dictate, not to prescribe laws: we go only to plant there the standard of England; and where that standard is planted, foreign dominion shall not come.'

The effect of this speech on the house can hardly be described: even Mr. Brougham was charmed into unqualified admiration; and in supporting the motion, declared, 'that the burdens of the country, however oppressive, would be borne cheerfully through the impending struggle, if war should be the result; for now

CHAP.
LXIV.

1826.

we were governed on wise, liberal, and truly English principles. He thought the Portuguese constitution worthy of that distinguished statesman's patronage, who had the present management of our foreign affairs: the subject had inspired his eloquence with a degree of fervor unprecedented in effect; even (and he could not rank it higher) beyond that right honorable gentleman's former most eloquent orations. He felt, that with the strong and impregnable principles now acted on by our government, no burdens would hinder us, if the day of trial should come, from coping with a world in arms: but the day of trial would not come; the knowledge that these principles were acted on would be a security against it.

Nothing could be more just than these observations; and the result was exactly what had been anticipated; if such principles had been extensively acted on at an earlier period, and the determination of England had been more pointedly declared in favor of constitutional governments, against the bigotry, the contempt of popular rights, and the tyranny displayed by despots, probably much human suffering, and much diplomatic confusion, would have been prevented: but such principles unhappily did not flourish in the Castlereagh school of politics.

It was fortunate for Mr. Canning's fame that his motion was combated, and an amendment proposed; for he thus became engaged in a reply, which even surpassed the eloquence of his preceding speech. Sir Robert Wilson and Mr. Baring, though they supported the address, had strongly censured government for allowing France to usurp and retain the occupation of Spain: in answer to this, Mr. Canning explained, that when the French army entered Spain, we might, if we chose, have visited that measure by a war; but such a war would not, in these days, have been the proper method of restoring the balance of power, which varies as civilisation advances, and new nations spring up: to take a leaf from the book of European policy in the times of William III. or of Anne, for supporting that balance now, would be to disregard

the march of events, and to regulate our policy by a confusion of facts. 'I admit,' he said, 'that the entrance of a French army into Spain was a measure of disparagement to Great Britain—was a severe blow to the feelings of this country. One of the modes of redress lay in a direct attack on France, through a war on the Spanish soil; the other was to make the possession of Spain itself harmless in rival hands—to make it worse than harmless; to make it injurious to the possessor: this latter mode I have adopted. Do you think that, for the disparagement to England, we have not been compensated? Do you think that, for the blockade of Cadiz, England has not received a full recompense? I looked at Spain by another name than Spain: I looked on that power as Spain and the Indies; and so looking at the Indies, I have there called a new world into existence, and regulated the balance of power; thus redeeming the movement of France, and leaving her own act on her, unmitigated and unredressed; so that she would now thankfully get rid of her responsibility, and shake off a burden too heavy to be borne without complaint. France would now be glad if England would assist her in dispensing with this burden; and the only way of riveting France to the possession of Spain, would be to make that possession a point of honor. I repeat it, the object of the present expedition is not war, but to take the last chance of peace: if England does not go promptly to the aid of Portugal, Portugal will be trampled on, England will be disgraced, and then war will come; come too in the train of degradation: if we wait until Spain have courage to ripen her secret machinations into open hostility, we shall have war; shall have the war of pacificators; and who can tell when that war shall end?'

Never perhaps did political eloquence obtain a greater triumph than on this occasion: every body, but Mr. Bankes and Mr. Hume, appeared touched by the sacred flame; and when the latter gentleman's amendment was put, it received the support of only three or four members; after which the original

CHAP.
LXIV.

1826.

question was carried with that number of dissentients. On the same night, a similar address in the upper house was moved by lord Bathurst, and seconded by lord Holland; when even the duke of Wellington, though he lamented the necessity of interference, and endeavored to screen his *beloved* Ferdinand behind the perfidious character of political servants, captains-general, and inferior ministers, was obliged to confess that a *casus fœderis* existed, which justified the interposition of our troops; while he still hoped that war would be prevented, and trusted for that happy result to the cordial assistance which we might expect from *France!*

The general sentiment of the country seconded that unanimity which prevailed in parliament respecting so important a measure; and the prompt decision of government quickly effected the purpose intended. There was not a moment's delay: the news which made known the imminent peril of our ancient ally arrived on the eighth; the king's message was brought to the house on the eleventh; the discussion took place next day; early on the fourteenth, 5000 troops, under the command of sir William Clinton, began their march toward the coast; the very winds of heaven seemed to favor the righteous cause; and our first detachment appeared in the Tagus on the twenty-fifth. The treachery and dissimulation of Ferdinand instantly gave way to his fears, while the French government recalled the diplomatic instrument of its intrigues; and the independence of Portugal, with its constitution, was for a time preserved: but the movement of a British army produced not effects half so extensive or permanent as the speech of a British minister. Notwithstanding the penal prohibitions with which continental powers are accustomed to intrench themselves against our press, that speech found its way over all the countries of Europe, and into the inmost recesses of despotism; alarming the agents and abettors of tyranny, while it gave encouragement to those who were still engaged in liberating their necks from the yoke of slavery: from that time,

not only the heart of the British nation, but the hope of the liberal portion of Europe, was attached to Mr. Canning's ministry; and though the principles of his generous policy were obscured for a time under less liberal and less enlightened administrations, yet their influence is still felt, and awes in some degree the despots of the old, as well as the democrats of the new world. But though sentiments in favor of Mr. Canning were making rapid progress both at home and abroad, that minister himself soon experienced the fatal effects of his popularity: the line of separation which existed between him and a powerful section of the cabinet, who regarded his warmth and eloquence as a fatal demonstration of liberalism, was now widened; while his personal assumption of superiority in the house, no less than his open patronage of popular principles, exasperated that jealous spirit with which he was regarded by the high tories: nor did the language held by this minister, regarding Spain and her colonies, as well as France, fail to rouse the anger of those despotic sovereigns, who had cast their fetters round the liberties of the continent, and who began to see with alarm that revolution which was taking place in the public mind of Great Britain on this subject.

In the eastern part of Europe, the prospects of the Greeks were gloomy, though their perseverance gained for them respect among other nations. The sultan, having accommodated his differences with Russia, proceeded to dissolve the corps of janissaries, to introduce European discipline into his armies, and to reorganise the decaying system of Ottoman government: in the mean time, Missolonghi, the key of western Greece, had fallen before the murderous assaults of Ibrahim Pasha; and the national assembly made an affecting appeal to the patriotism of their nation, as well as to the generous feelings of European states. The interference of governments was a task of great delicacy and difficulty; but in every christian country, the melancholy fate of Missolonghi, and the depressed condition of Greece under Ibrahim Pasha and his

CHAP.
LXIV.

1827.

barbarous Egyptians, produced liberal contributions: nor was it found difficult to negotiate loans among speculators, who became anxious to draw profit even from the distress of suffering patriots: of these resources, a considerable portion was spent in steam vessels and other ships, which never left the countries in which they were built; and in large contributions to greedy contractors, who disgusted every honest mind by the enormous rapacity which they disguised under the mask of general philanthropy.

The only event in our domestic annals which requires notice, was the opening of the suspension bridge over the Menai Strait on the thirtieth of January. This stupendous structure, projected by Mr. Telford, for the convenience of communication between Great Britain and Ireland, is, in the extreme length of its chains, from their fastenings in the rocks, about 1600 feet; and the height of the road-way from high-water line is 100: it has two carriage roads, with an intermediate footpath; and a very ingenious method is employed to counteract the expansion and contraction of the iron. The suspending power is calculated at 2016 tons, and the weight to be suspended is 342 tons; leaving a disposable power of 1674 tons: this bridge stands among the most surprising efforts of art in Europe.

Death of
the duke
of York.

Parliament resumed its sittings on the eighth of February; another incident having occurred, during its recess, tending still farther to promote the ascendancy which Mr. Canning had acquired. The duke of York, whose health had been for more than half a year in a state of unequal though alarming danger, expired on the fifth of January; and by the decease of this prince, whose frank and amiable disposition, together with his great services to our army, induced the nation to overlook the irregularities of his private life, the duke of Clarence became presumptive heir to the crown; when ministers took that opportunity of proposing an increase of £3000 per annum to his income, as well as £6000 as a jointure to his consort; and this motion, though strongly opposed by

Mr. Hume and others, on the plea that no additional expenses were entailed on his royal highness, was carried by an overwhelming majority. To have placed any other person at the head of our army, as commander-in-chief, except him who had so often led it on to victory, would not only have outraged the feelings of the nation, but even lowered the British character in the estimation of the world: accordingly, the duke of Wellington assumed that high rank with the approbation of all parties: this approbation, however, was not generally extended to his retention of a seat in the cabinet; since there were many, who traced that strict impartiality which had pervaded the duke of York's administration, in a great degree, to his freedom from ministerial connexions.

At the funeral of his royal highness, which was attended by the cabinet ministers, Mr. Canning caught a severe cold; and thus laid the foundation of that disease which soon afterwards terminated his valuable life: he was unable to attend the opening of parliament; and up to the fifteenth of February his state was considered dangerous: from the sixteenth, his health rapidly improved; but on the day following, an event occurred, which, connected with the foreign secretary's illness, threw the cabinet into a state of great embarrassment: this was the sudden and alarming indisposition of lord Liverpool, who was seized with a fit of paralysis; from the effects of which he never recovered, though the government continued to go on for a short time nominally under his guidance. As soon as the nature of this attack was known, Mr. Peel set off to Brighton to consult the king; but Mr. Canning, though resident at that place, was too unwell to join his colleague: before he could reach town, the other members of administration had held frequent meetings, where a strong disinclination was manifested to act under the right honorable gentleman, if his majesty, in accordance with public expectation, should place him at the head of affairs. On the twenty-second, Mr. Canning was reported to be convalescent, and had an audience of the king: on Tuesday, the

CHAP.
LXIV.

1827.

Illness of
lord Liver-
pool.

CHAP.
LXIV.
1827.

twenty-seventh, he came to town; and on the first of March, he appeared in the house, and moved for a committee on the corn laws, which had been twice postponed on his account. As expounder of the plan digested by lord Liverpool, Mr. Canning, after a speech of great length and perspicuity, proposed a scale of duties, varying in proportion to the average price of grain throughout the kingdom: sixty shillings per quarter being taken for wheat, as the point from which the grower was intitled to the protection of a high duty, twenty shillings was proposed for that purpose: if the price fell below sixty shillings, the duty was to increase in a duplicate ratio; if the price rose above that point, it was gradually to decrease, until at seventy shillings importation was to be perfectly free. No vote was taken on the resolutions when first introduced; and the debate was delayed for a week, that every semblance of precipitation regarding so important a measure might be avoided: on the eighth of March, when its discussion was resumed, the plan did not appear to please the zealots of any party: the landed interests desired a higher scale of duties; the manufacturing classes a lower; while many speculators would willingly have operated upon the currency, instead of corn: after frequent debates, however, on its details, and several divisions, the ministerial scheme passed the house of commons by large majorities. Certainly few schemes of legislation seem to have been more ingeniously adapted to the purposes required, than that of the 'sliding scale;' which, indicating by its fluctuation the exact difference between those two essential elements of the corn market, supply and demand, impartially regulates prices, protecting the agriculturist against the speculator, the importer against the agriculturist, and the consumer against a combination of the other two. Let the harvest be deficient, and even before it is gathered, foreign corn at a nominal duty comes into the market: let crops be abundant, and the grower is secured against that competition from abroad, which would rob him of all advantage, and disable him from

supporting those burthens which are thrown more peculiarly upon cultivators of the land.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1827.

In this session the attacks on lord Eldon were led by Mr. D. W. Harvey, a speaker of extraordinary eloquence: on the fifth of April this gentleman moved for returns of the business set down before, and disposed of by, the chancellor, in equity, bankruptcy, and the house of lords; the object being to fix on him the responsibility of all arrears: but the motion was negatived by 132 votes against 66. Meanwhile sir John Copley, the new master of the rolls, had obtained leave to introduce a bill, with the sanction of the chancellor himself, founded on the measure of 1826; and obviating some of its practical difficulties: this bill, however, had not proceeded far, when it became obvious, from the state of lord Liverpool's health, that the responsibility of reforming the practice of the court of chancery must devolve on a new administration.

Circumstances at this time seemed peculiarly favorable to the claims of the Roman catholics; for two of their chief opponents, the duke of York and lord Liverpool, were removed by death and illness; while the influence of Mr. Canning preponderated in the cabinet: sir Francis Burdett therefore was charged with their petition; and his speech on this occasion opened a debate in the lower house, which lasted two nights, giving full scope to the talents of its principal orators. The grand argument relied on both by the favorers and the opposers of emancipation, was the interpretation of the treaty of Limerick; and Mr. Peel, whose speech made a deep impression on the house, contended, that political privileges were never contemplated by either of the parties to that treaty, which merely secured to the Roman catholics free exercise of their religion, independent of political power: with regard to the general question, he confessed that he distrusted the Romanists, on whose religious faith a scheme of political power was founded; and that he could not contemplate the doctrines of confession, absolution, and indulgences, without a strong suspicion that they were maintained for the

Catholic
question.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1827.

purpose of confirming the influence which man exercises on man; nor was it of any consequence that authority be called spiritual, if it practically influences us in our social conduct. Few things he thought more improbable, than the notion that a removal of present disabilities would be a consummation of the wishes and efforts of the papists: if they gained power, they would naturally wish to better the condition of their religious system, to extend its influence over the country, and draw it into closer connexion with government: the consequence of this would be, to bring the catholic and protestant religions into collision in such a manner, as might entail destruction on the latter: and what greater evil could be conceived than the confusion which must prevail for ages during the conflict? But though he believed that an admission of the catholic claims would endanger our constitution, yet if we were satisfied that it would restore tranquillity to Ireland, he would sacrifice his apprehensions of the ultimate result to the attainment of that immense present benefit; this however he could not make up his mind to believe. If the friends of emancipation proposed, after having carried their point, to make the religion of the great majority the religion of the state, and open to them all its high offices, he could understand how such a line of policy might appease and tranquillise the catholics; but this they disavowed: yet, if they proposed to maintain the protestant establishment as that of the state, there would still exist a barrier which the catholics would endeavor to remove. After animadverting on the unjustifiable extent to which the interference of catholic priests had been carried during the late elections, on the neglect shown by their prelates in restraining them, and on the extraordinary asperity of Dr. Doyle's publications, Mr. Peel concluded, with expressing the pain he felt in differing from those persons, for whom personally he entertained a cordial respect, and with whom on almost every other topic he fully agreed: the influence of some great names, he said, had lately been lost to the cause which he supported; but he had never adopted

his opinions on it from deference either to high station or to high ability; still less with a view to favor or personal aggrandisement.

CHAP.
LXIV.
1827.

Sir John Copley, master of the rolls, whose zeal in the protestant cause had gained him a seat in the house for the university of Cambridge, turned into the tide of his own eloquence copious streams from a pamphlet, which Dr. Philpotts,⁵ one of the cleverest writers of the day, had addressed to Mr. Canning; and of which the question of securities occupied a large portion. The whole matter, according to his opinion, was one of expediency; and if the concessions asked for could be granted with safety to the civil liberties and religious faith of protestants, he admitted that the catholics were intitled to them: with regard, however, to securities on these points, he denied that any such had been, or could be, offered: while he instanced several departed statesmen, whom he termed 'a constellation of genius, knowlege, and political ability,' with Mr. Pitt at their head, who had declared in decisive terms their determination not to grant emancipation without special and efficient securities: he even instanced the authority of the present secretary for foreign affairs himself, and of the Irish attorney-general, as having uttered sentiments to this effect;—that it could not be granted, unless adequate securities were given to protect the country against the danger of foreign interference.

Mr. Plunkett, the attorney-general for Ireland, who immediately answered this speech, observed, that here was a new doctrine taken up by the opponents of catholic emancipation,—that of preparing concession by exaction of securities, and declaring at the same time that no securities, which could be given, would be efficient; and he asserted, that Mr. Pitt was very unjustly placed at the head of such a school: he also contrasted with it the conduct of lord Liverpool, who had defeated the catholic bill passed by the commons in 1825, when brought into the upper house; not, however, on the ground of inefficient securities; since

⁵ Now bishop of Exeter.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1827.

he had distinctly stated, that if he could discard his objections against the principle of the measure, he should not care a straw about securities; nay, that he could in half an hour frame a clause which would leave them free from all objection. Mr. Canning, who closed the debate, and who had been most pointedly alluded to throughout sir John Copley's speech, after disposing of its argument, ironically vindicated himself for not having concerted a measure of securities with the pope of Rome; because we had not the same facilities which other courts possessed, like those of Prussia, Saxony, and the Netherlands. 'He happened to have seen in some popular tracts, that to correspond with the pope was high treason; therefore when his holiness addressed a complimentary note to our present gracious king, he, as secretary of state, took the opinion of the great law officers on the subject of an answer; and they declared, that, if he did reply to the pope's letter, he would incur the penalties of a *præmunire*.' Here Mr. Canning read, amid shouts of laughter, the opinion alluded to, signed 'R. Gifford and John Copley;' on which, the master of the rolls observed, that the honorable gentleman had been reading a private and confidential communication. Mr. Canning then continued:—'It was true, he had made this application in confidence; but he had a right to acquaint the house with it, when he saw occasion: he, being an ignorant person, looked into Burn's Justice; and there he found that the penalties attached to a *præmunire*, were attainder, forfeiture of goods, incapacity to bring an action, and liability to be slain by any one with impunity: as this was a matter touching life and fortune, he could not be expected, after having acquired such knowledge, to go to the pope of Rome; and yet to the pope they must go, if they would have any security.' The master of the rolls again rose to say that the opinion was private, and the disclosure a breach of confidence; but Mr. Canning maintained, that it was official, and that he had a right to use it; though the circumstance had been unthought of by him, from the period at which

it occurred, to a very recent time: but he had seen elsewhere an impeachment on his honor and honesty; he had read in print⁶ an accusation, that he had abandoned all securities: the attack therefore was not unexpected; though the quarter whence it now proceeded was the last from which he could have foreseen it. In this speech Mr. Canning also defended the memory of Pitt; declaring, it was the fixed intention of that great minister to carry the catholic question; to the truth of which assertion he was ready to depose before any tribunal: he avowed his opinion, that the cause had lost ground, in the house, as well as in the country; but he was convinced, that all unfavorable impressions must give way to the effect of repeated discussions; since that which right reason, humanity, and justice loudly demanded, could not fail to find an echo in the breasts of Englishmen. The present anticipations of Mr. Canning proved correct; for the motion was lost by only four voices in one of the fullest houses known; the ayes being 272, and the noes 276.

In consequence of this result, the order of the day in the house of lords for taking into consideration the catholic petition was discharged, on the motion of lord Lansdowne; 'who feared to increase, in the present state of Irish feeling, the disastrous conviction, that a majority of both houses in parliament was opposed to a consideration of the claims of their catholic brethren.' This feeling however in Ireland did not lead to language more menacing or vindictive than that which had been used before the discussion: a general meeting of Romanists in Dublin, after expressing 'the regret and awful forebodings' with which they viewed the vote of the commons,—a vote, which rejected the prayers 'of seven millions of oppressed, injured, and discontented subjects,'—exhorted the people to cultivate peace, and wait calmly the course of events, in the hope that Britain would repent and relax, 'before the catholics were driven to despair.' With much less sense and moderation, a non-intercourse act was talked

⁶ He alluded to the pamphlet of Dr. Philpotts.

CHAP.
 LXIV.
 1827.

of, like that which the discontented colonists of America had put into execution; but a plan to deprive Ireland of her market for linen, grain, and provisions, found very few partisans: a scheme of open and inveterate hostility against the established church, proposed by other public organs of the party, met with more supporters: 'against that church,' it was said, 'must all their energies be directed; for that church has sworn eternal enmity to the catholics; and they must register a vow against it in heaven:' the repeal of the union also became a favorite subject of agitation; and a notion that the Romanists had been induced to accede to it by the prospect of emancipation, found supporters even in the house of commons. Mr. M. Fitzgerald went so far as to give notice of a motion, recommending the adoption of measures to carry into effect 'the policy of the union:' Mr. Spring Rice also gave notice of a motion for inquiry into the character of the Irish government: events, however, soon occurred, which occasioned the withdrawal of these motions, by convincing the principals concerned in the question, that by temporary repose they were more likely to obtain their object.

Difficul-
 ties of
 ministers.

The health of lord Liverpool was now in a hopeless state; but no step was taken to supply his place as premier till the twenty-eighth of March, on which day Mr. Canning was summoned by the king to Windsor. It was well known that dissensions existed in the cabinet; and that serious difficulties were created by a large portion of it, with the lord chancellor at its head, hostile in the highest degree to that gentleman; while a majority in the house of commons, as well as of the people at large, decidedly called on him to take up the mantle of Pitt, and direct the councils of Great Britain: the difficulties of forming an efficient ministry were very great, but precisely calculated to give play to motives of personal consideration, and enable an ambitious statesman to attain his object.⁷

⁷ Writing on this subject to his daughter, lord Eldon observes, 'this (lord Liverpool's attack) is a most tremendous blow, *under present circumstances*, and its effects on individuals must be important. Heaven knows who will succeed him.

Mr. Canning had been called to this interview merely in his capacity of privy counsellor, to assist his sovereign in re-constructing the cabinet; and the advice which he first proffered, though it bore an appearance of great disinterestedness and self-denial, was in fact utterly impracticable; for it recommended, that a ministry should be formed, unanimous in the rejection of catholic emancipation; to forward which arrangement, he professed his own willingness to retire from office: those, however, on whom it would have thrown the responsibility of government, saw the state of inefficiency and embarrassment in which this proposition tended to involve them, and instantly rejected it. His majesty accordingly proposed that the plan of administration should remain unchanged; some anti-catholic peer being appointed premier, to prevent such increase of adherents to the catholic cause, as a minister of that rank, being its known advocate, would necessarily promote; and also to tranquillise those members, who felt unwilling to act under any one of their own number, that had been with them a subordinate in office: to this arrangement, however, which would have excluded Mr. Canning from the grand object of his ambition, he decidedly objected; declaring, that he would never degrade himself by forming part of an administration, which considered a person entertaining his views on the catholic question, as disqualified to fill the highest office in the state. This resolution, certainly not reconcilable with his practical conduct since 1822, amounted to a declaration, that he would accede to no arrangement, which did not place him, or a statesman of his own school, at the head of affairs; and as he could not conceive that the party opposed to his views were less sincere in principle than himself, an inflexible adherence to such a determination put an end to every rational prospect of keeping the cabinet

CHAP.
LXIV.

1827.

Peel went down to Brighton, to inform the king of the event, and is not yet returned. If other things made it certain that he would otherwise succeed him, I should *suppose* Canning's health would not let him undertake the labor of the situation: but *ambition* will attempt any thing.'—vol. ii. p. 583. Soon afterwards he says, 'I think—who could have thought it? that Mr. Canning will have his own way. I *guess* that I, Wellington, Peel, Bathurst, Westmoreland, &c. will be out.'

CHAP.
LXIV.
—
1827.

together: on this principle, Mr. Canning in effect declared, that his services could only be secured by the highest office; for even if he had consented that another of his party should be the ostensible head of the cabinet, (and he seems at one time to have thought of Mr. Robinson) he himself, like lord Chatham on a former occasion, would have had the real power. It was perfectly natural that he should be unwilling to resign so splendid a prize now within his grasp, and act under men of less imposing talents and attainments; but it is no less true that this resolution was the cause which broke up the Liverpool administration. He also knew that this would drive from him one of his most able and influential colleagues; for when he mentioned the subject to Mr. Peel, on the twenty-ninth of March, that gentleman declared, without reserve, that a sense of duty would render resignation imperative on him, in the event of Mr. Canning, with his known sentiments on the subject of catholic emancipation, being called to the head of the ministry.

The latter part of February, as well as the whole of March, was spent in attempts to overcome these various difficulties; while opposition, both in parliament and from the press, aided the cause of the foreign secretary: for they felt assured, that Mr. Canning must, if appointed premier, fill up from their ranks the void occasioned by the resignation of his colleagues: the delay, however, which had taken place, impelled Mr. Tierney, who was aware of existing dissensions, and desirous of hastening their explosion, to oppose the vote of supply on the thirtieth, under pretext that there was no administration responsible for its expenditure: this attempt, though it was defeated on a division, had some effect in hastening a settlement; and, on the second of April, a cabinet meeting took place, when the discussions lasted several hours: next day, sir T. Lethbridge gave notice for a humble address to the king, 'praying him, in his formation of a ministry, to take into serious consideration the importance of its unanimity on questions affecting the vital interests of the empire:' this

proposal excited much derision in the house, and was abandoned by its author; but an audience of his majesty was claimed by the duke of Rutland; who, as it was confidently asserted, had been authorised by certain peers to lay before him respectfully their determination not to support Mr. Canning, if, in the exercise of his royal prerogative, he should make that gentleman prime minister: it was said also, that several meetings took place between the foreign secretary and the duke of Wellington, with the professed object of removing from the mind of the former any notion of hostility against him in the breast of his grace and of his friends; but in reality to draw from Mr. Canning, during the course of long conferences, some expression of a wish, 'that the duke should take the government:' also it was reported, that when this scheme failed, Mr. Peel⁸ was commissioned, by command of his majesty, to see Mr. Canning, for the purpose of naming one, 'whose appointment would solve all difficulties;'—the duke of Wellington. 'This bold plunge, however,' says an acute historian,⁹ 'proved as fruitless as the experimental manœuvre: the foreign secretary peremptorily objected to a military premier; and on the following day, his majesty commanded him to propose a plan for re-constructing the administration;' although the offer was said to have been accompanied with a proviso, to please the heads of a certain party, —that the new minister should abandon all right of recommendation to church preferment: this however was resolutely refused; for Mr. Canning well knew that the general voice of the nation must prevail; and his anticipations were confirmed by an unconditional surrender of the office into his hands.

Appoint-
ment of
Mr. Can-
ning as
premier.

A correspondence now took place between the new premier and Wellington; which, after commencing with terms of old affection and esteem, concluded with the coldest expressions of formal politeness: the duke, on the receipt of the secretary's first note, assuring him that he had been instructed by the king to form

⁸ See Mr. Stapleton's supplementary volume.

⁹ Wallace's History of George IV. vol. iii. p. 301.

CHAP.
LXIV.
1827.

a new ministry, and soliciting his grace's co-operation, pretended not to know who was to be at the head of that ministry; and, in answer to Mr. Canning's natural expression of surprise, very laconically declined to become a member. This correspondence was laid before the king; and the duke, having sent in his resignation under feelings of considerable irritation, received a communication to the following effect from his majesty; who, from the moment when he surrendered the government into Mr. Canning's hands, persisted in supporting that gentleman with the most commendable integrity and good faith:—'The king receives the duke of Wellington's resignation with the same sentiments of regret, which his grace professes to feel in tendering it.'

The premier, anxious to retain as many of his former colleagues as possible, solicited their adherence to an administration constructed on principles which lord Liverpool had so long sanctioned; but Mr. Peel, adhering to his previous declaration, that with Mr. Canning, or any other friend to catholic emancipation as prime minister, the principles of lord Liverpool's cabinet could not be supported, determined to decline office: lord Eldon stated, that, on account of his advanced age, resignation had long been his wish, and he required only four months to wind up the business of his court; but the answer of a few others was not so decisive. It was now the eleventh of April; and, as parliament would adjourn on the twelfth, it became necessary to communicate some arrangement to the house of commons: accordingly, Mr. Canning, on the morning of the twelfth, attended his majesty, who had already received resignations from the duke of Wellington, lord Westmoreland, lord Bexley, and Mr. Peel; nor had the audience lasted long, before those of lords Eldon and Bathurst also were sent in: if this had been intended for intimidation, the plot would have been laid in vain, for the king instantly confirmed the appointment; which was announced in the house of commons on the same evening by Mr. C. Wynne, amid deafening shouts of applause: nor was

the joy of the country less, or less clearly manifested; for Mr. Canning was at this period in the zenith of his popularity: his early errors were forgotten in his recent exhibition of spirited, manly, and enlightened sentiments; and his faults, which were ascribed to the prejudices of party, and even to his necessities, were all forgiven: his advance to high station by personal qualities and abilities, rather than by the patronage of an oligarchy, whose aim was to control the sovereign as well as the people, peculiarly gratified the latter; while from his liberal domestic policy, and the European fame which he had acquired, they anticipated a worthy successor of that great minister, who may be called the parent of reform; a minister, who, if he had not been interrupted in his progress by the French war, and cut off by the too early stroke of death, would probably have been the greatest innovator recorded in our annals: for, as Mr. Canning, in one of his later speeches, asserted, in applying philosophy to politics, he merely carried into effect Mr. Pitt's declarations.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1827.

Of the old cabinet, there now remained only lord Harrowby, with Messrs. Huskisson, Robinson, and C. Wynne; for lord Melville, to the consternation of all Scotland, resigned on the evening of the twelfth; avowing, with a remarkable spirit of candor, the instinct by which he was led—a doubt respecting the stability of the new arrangements: this, however, as it was the last vacancy made, was the first supplied; for Mr. Canning next morning revived the dignity of lord high admiral of England¹⁰ in the person of the heir presumptive to the throne; and the duke of Clarence's acceptance of office created no little dismay among those who had just thrown off the coil: so striking a sign of the times was thought not to have been lost on lord Bexley, who immediately retracted his resignation; neither did sir John Copley, like poor lord Melville, require any securities against the

Formation
of the new
cabinet.

¹⁰ It had lain dormant 127 years, since the time of Thomas earl of Pembroke, who succeeded prince George of Denmark, the husband of queen Anne: on the present occasion, instead of the usual board of junior lords, a council of four members was appointed to assist the lord high admiral.

CHAP.
LXIV.
1827.

claims of competitors; but he gladly accepted the great seal, with the title of lord Lyndhurst: lord Anglesea succeeded the duke of Wellington as master-general of the ordnance, with a seat in the cabinet; earl Dudley, Mr. Sturges Bourne, and Mr. Robinson, now created lord Goderich, were nominated respectively as secretaries for the foreign, home, and colonial departments; lords Bexley and Palmerston, with Messrs. Huskisson and Wynne, retained their situations; the duke of Devonshire was made lord chamberlain; the duke of Portland, privy seal; and lord Harrowby, president of the council: sir John Leach, sir Antony Hart, and sir James Scarlett became respectively master of the rolls, vice-chancellor, and attorney-general: the premier himself occupied, like Mr. Pitt, the two offices of first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer. To supply several places, a negotiation had been opened with the marquis of Lansdowne; but though no official appointments at present resulted from it, his lordship, with sir Francis Burdett and a large body of the whigs, proffered their unofficial support to Mr. Canning's administration: the king's firmness, however, was a tower of strength to his minister. Thus was effected the formation of a government under a premier favorable to the concession of the claims of the Roman catholics: but it was so formed on the express condition, that the question of those claims should be an *open one*; that is, one upon which ministers vote, not unitedly as a cabinet, but each individually according to his own inclination.

The length of time which elapsed before his majesty's decision was made, arose from a natural reluctance to part with men whom he had so long admitted into his councils, and honored with his confidence; but when their own conduct put an end to such scruples, and the dictatorial pretensions which they advanced became personally offensive, he was driven to act on his own feelings of dignity and independence, which happily coincided with the wishes of his people: nothing could have been more fortunate than such a crisis, occurring, as it did, like many

others that have been noticed in this history, exactly at the proper time: a large uncompromising body of men, who stuck like leeches to the state, for the purpose of sucking its blood, were thus shaken off: so long, indeed, had they held office, that they had begun to consider their places as a species of property, and to resent any interference with them as an injury or an insult; nor was a measure of reform or public utility to be entertained for a moment, which might possibly militate against the prejudices, or curtail the emoluments of any of the party. Neither ought we to pass unnoticed the unexpected union now effected between some of the leading tories and the leading whigs; a union which lord Mansfield characterised by a very apposite quotation from the *Anti-Jacobin*;—‘a sudden thought strikes me; let us swear eternal friendship:’ but still it was a union productive of very important results. On the twenty-seventh of April, the new ministry was gazetted; and on the thirtieth, his majesty held a court, at which lords Eldon, Westmoreland, and Bathurst, as well as Mr. Peel, severally had audiences to resign their seals of office; the duke of Wellington being the only seceder who did not attend formally for that purpose: the new ministers also kissed hands on their appointments; and Messrs. Scarlett and Hart received the honor of knighthood. Mr. Canning, on going to and returning from the palace, was loudly cheered by an assemblage far more numerous and respectable than is generally met with on such occasions: next day, he had to encounter in parliament one of the most virulent oppositions that ever assailed a minister of the crown. ‘The premiership,’ says Dr. Croly, ‘had for twelve years been a bed of slumber: it now fell into the hands of one, who made it a bed of feverish anxiety and bitter wakefulness—George Canning, the first debater, the most dexterous politician, and the happiest wit of the house; the most perplexed, unhappy, and disappointed of ministers.’¹¹

¹¹ History of George IV. p. 472.

CHAPTER XLV.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1827.

Re-assembling of parliament—Explanations by the seceding members of the cabinet—Formidable opposition to the ministry—A portion of the whig party joins the administration—Rejection of the new corn bill by the lords—Financial statements—Corrupt boroughs—Improvement of the criminal code—Close of the session—Death of Mr. Canning—His character—Lord Goderich prime minister—Dissentions, and dissolution of the cabinet—Duke of Wellington appointed premier—Review of foreign policy—Treaty with France and Russia—Battle of Navarino—Meeting of parliament—Dispute between the duke of Wellington and Mr. Huskisson—State of the finances—Grant to the family of Mr. Canning—State of the currency—Budget—Repeal of the test and corporation acts—Catholic claims—Resignation of Mr. Huskisson and other members of the cabinet—Prorogation of parliament—War between Russia and Turkey—State of Portugal—Disturbances in Ireland—Recall of the marquis of Anglesea—Death and character of the earl of Liverpool—Trial and execution of Burke at Edinburgh—Opening of the London University and St. Katharine Docks—Review of foreign policy.

Re-assembling of parliament.

THE house of commons re-assembled on the first of May; but so much time had been lost through the dissolution of the old administration, and the hostility of parties now occasioned so much more to be consumed, that very little public business was completed during the session: Mr. Peel took an early opportunity to state the reasons for his late secession; disclaiming at the same time all intention of opposing the new government, and carrying himself free from every appearance of a factious spirit. ‘I retired from office,’ he said, ‘because, from the first moment of my public life, I have taken an active and decided part on a great and vital question,—that of extending political

privileges to the Roman catholics: for eighteen years I have constantly offered an uncompromising, but I hope a temperate, fair, and constitutional resistance to every proposition for granting to them any farther concessions. My opposition is founded on principle: I think the continuance of those bars, which prevent the acquisition of political power by the catholics, necessary for the maintenance of our constitution, and for the interests of our established church: it is not merely, that my honorable friend differs in opinion from me on this important question; but the change in administration occasions the transfer of all that influence and power, which belongs to the office of a prime minister, into the hands of one who will use it for the purpose of forwarding an object which I have always resisted: it is not a transfer of that influence and power from one ordinary man to another ordinary man; but from the most able opponent of the catholic claims to their most zealous and eloquent advocate.' Mr. Peel then proceeded to justify the course taken by his late colleagues, who had also resigned office, as affording 'a splendid example of disinterested conduct to all public men:' he vindicated them from the charge of acting in concert, or in a spirit of cabal; declaring that he himself had never held any communication with the lord chancellor, respecting the course he intended to pursue; neither did he know his lordship's intentions: the same, he believed, might be asserted of every other member of the late cabinet.

This speech was received with loud cheers, and elicited much applause from Mr. Brougham, who at the same time declared his determination to support the liberal policy of Mr. Canning's administration, against any attempts of his late colleagues, and present opponents, to drive him from the helm.¹ The minister

¹ Having lost the office of attorney-general to the queen at her death, he now received a silk gown and a patent of precedence from the new ministry, whom he supported in the house of commons. Having long been a fierce assailant of lord Eldon—he ascribed his long detention from that distinction to his lordship's influence; but, he afterwards became convinced that this was not the case, and made the *amende honorable* to the chancellor. His disappointment arose from the king's

CHAP.
LXV.
1827.

himself then rose to explain the course of his own proceedings in a luminous and well-digested harangue. 'The house,' he said, 'greatly mistakes my situation, if they believe it to be one of gratified ambition: from the beginning of the discussions on the catholic claims, I felt that the separation of my honorable friend and myself was inevitable, and not far remote: would to God I could now persuade myself that his retirement will be but for a short time! Had the necessity, which has made the retreat of one of us inevitable, been left in my hands, my decision would have been for my own resignation, and against that of my right honorable friend: my first object was, to quit office; my next, to remain in it, with all my old colleagues, exactly on the same terms as usual regarding this very catholic question.' He then detailed the circumstances which preceded his appointment. 'If,' said he, 'I had submitted in my person, as an advocate of the catholic claims, to the principle of exclusion, I should have dishonored myself: such a submission would have been a badge of helotism; an indelible disgrace to my political life.' Mr. Dawson, a brother-in-law of Mr. Peel, having vehemently attacked the union of the whigs with Mr. Canning's party, their disinterested support was ably defended by sir Francis Burdett, as likely to promote enlightened principles of government both at home and abroad; more especially the cause of religious liberty.

The house of lords met on the following day; and when an opportunity was given to the ex-ministers of explaining their conduct, lord Eldon began by declaring that the accusation made against him of having attempted an unconstitutional dictation to his sovereign, was a base and scandalous falsehood: his opinion was, and always had been, that if the catholic claims were conceded, the religious liberties of this country were at an end; and that, with its religious liberties, would perish its civil freedom: holding such opinions, it was impossible that he could give into what must be

indignation at his speeches made during the queen's trial.—See *Life of Lord Eldon*, vol. iii. p. 2.

the views of the new minister, whether those views were to be carried into immediate execution, or suspended for the better securing of his purpose. Could he honestly retain office under an administration formed on principles so hostile to his own? He could not allow that the new cabinet had been formed on the principles of lord Liverpool, who had been as zealous, honest, and candid in opposing the catholic claims, as he had no doubt the present premier was in supporting them. As to the mode of his resignation, he wholly disclaimed the imputation of having concerted it with Mr. Peel, though he professed for that gentleman sentiments of high regard and esteem.²

As the duke of Wellington's retirement, not only from administration, but from the command of the army, which was not a cabinet office, seemed to indicate a more decided hostility than that of other seceders, it excited proportionally a greater degree of interest: on both points his grace entered into a full explanation of his conduct and the motives of it. After adverting to abuse poured on him from a press, which, if not in the pay, was under the direct influence of government, he proceeded to notice the correspondence between himself and Mr. Canning; complaining that he had not only been left with less information, but treated with less respect and deference than his colleagues: he (the duke of Wellington) was not requested to come and receive explanations concerning evident omissions in the letter first sent to him, nor was he referred to

² Mr. Canning himself in a speech made in the house of commons, May 3rd, vindicated his great opponent on this point. 'It was bare justice,' he said, 'to lord Eldon to say, that his conduct was that of a man of the highest feelings of honor; and that throughout, it had been above all exception.' When this veteran and really honest lawyer resigned the high office which he had held longer than any chancellor in the annals of our history, the king fell upon his neck and wept: at his departure, his majesty placed in his hand a small key, saying, 'he hoped that he would find at home a token not only of his present regard, but of that which he must feel to the latest hour of his life.' This gift of the sovereign was a beautiful tankard of silver gilt, having an accession medal of the king embodied in its lid, and bearing a very flattering inscription. His lordship feeling some delicacy in accepting this present apart from his colleagues, consulted them on the subject; and their answer was, 'You must accept the tankard, and provide wine for us to drink out of it.' A very gratifying address was presented to the ex-chancellor, by the masters in chancery, expressing their grateful sense of his kindness to them throughout the very long period in which he had held the great seal, and bearing testimony to his great learning and unsullied integrity.—See his Life, by Mr. H. Twiss, vol. ii.

CHAP.
LXV.
1827.

any person for information on those points; although, as he afterwards learned, his colleagues had been invited to go to the minister, and receive any explanations which they might require—or the minister himself had gone to them for such a purpose: still he determined that no pique of this kind should stop an amicable communication; and in that spirit he carried on the correspondence; in that spirit he wished to contrive means of continuing in his majesty's councils: but when he found that the right honorable gentleman himself was to be at the head of affairs, he considered whether he could, consistently with his avowed principles, join the new administration; and finding it to be impossible, he felt obliged to decline office. With regard to the question which he had put to Mr. Canning on this point, and which was said to have given offence;—‘Those,’ said his grace, ‘who formed part of lord Liverpool’s cabinet knew well what it was to which they pledged themselves; for they knew that his lordship was conscientiously opposed to all changes in the existing form of government: but those who coalesce with the right honorable gentleman, can have no idea how far this coalition may carry them: the new minister is the most able, active, and zealous partisan of changes with which the country is at present threatened: the principles of the noble earl were principles by which any man might safely abide; the principles of the right honorable gentleman fluctuate every day.’ Who could have supposed, that, within the short space of two years, the duke of Wellington’s cabinet would have repealed the test acts, and granted catholic emancipation; whilst its leader declared that an adherence to lord Liverpool’s principles would introduce all the horrors of civil war into the realm? But until governments take a more active part in forming public sentiment, and leading public opinion, they must ever be subjected to these mortifications: if statesmen rely too much on mere executive duties, on the formation or strengthening of parties, and on the preservation of old institutions, under circumstances and times totally different from those in which such

institutions were established, the current of public intelligence will run rapidly by them, and force the most violent changes on the administration, with which they ought to have originated.

Before the duke concluded this part of his explanation, he adverted to the motives which had been imputed to him, of resigning office because he was not made prime minister himself; on which occasion was heard his memorable declaration,—‘that he not only felt himself unwished for, but actually disqualified for any such station; that to have accepted it in place of the military office which he already held, would have argued him mad, or worse than mad.’ With regard, however, to his recent resignation even of that military post, his grace observed;—‘that, although not a cabinet office, it was one which placed its possessor in a constant and confidential relation with the king and his government: with the prime minister the commander-in-chief is in communication every day; he has not a control even over the army, the chief direction of which is placed in that minister’s hands: at the same time, the premier himself cannot withdraw any part of the army from a foreign station without consulting the commander-in-chief; he cannot make up his budget, or introduce any reform into the organisation of the army, without seeking his opinion. No political sentiments, however, would have prevented him from retaining this office under ordinary circumstances; but from the tone and tenor of the communications he had received from his majesty, from the nature of the invitation given to him by the right honorable gentleman in his first letter, and from the contents of the last which he had received from Mr. Canning by his majesty’s command, he saw that he could not remain with credit to himself or advantage to the country: his line of conduct had not been hastily adopted, though he had been most wantonly and unjustly abused.’

The other seceding peers justified their retirement generally on the same ground of political principle which had been taken by the duke of Wellington;

CHAP.
LXV.

1827.

except that lords Melville and Bathurst expressed an opinion, that with the chasm left by the secession of such men as the duke of Wellington, lord Eldon, and Mr. Peel, no administration could be formed with sufficient stability and capacity for governing the country: lord Bexley assigned his resignation to the fear of not being allowed freedom of opinion regarding a vital question; and justified his resumption of office, by the discovery that he had been in error on that point: all the noble lords, however, expressly disclaimed any idea of concert or confederacy in their plans; though the coincidence was suspicious, and they acknowledged its singularity.

Viscount Goderich, who had the task of defending the new administration in the upper house, declared, that so far from casting any imputation of conspiracy and cabal on his former colleagues, he verily believed, that if there had been more communication among them, much of the mischief and disorder which had occurred might have been prevented. If the government, as at present constituted, was not altogether satisfactory, that was not the fault of him or of his honorable and noble friends: the object of Mr. Canning had been to keep the elements of the late ministry together; but they had fallen away without any fault of his: was he then, in such a case, to say to his majesty, 'I will run away also, and leave you in such a predicament, as no sovereign was ever placed in before?'

Formida-
ble opposi-
tion to the
ministry.

As the chief strength of the seceders lay in the house of lords, the desultory warfare that ensued was principally confined to that region. The marquis of Lansdowne defended the junction of his party with the new ministry, as not occasioned by any sudden impulse, but by the identity which existed between its principles, and the spirit of those measures which government had been for some time pursuing in our foreign and domestic policy: he admitted to their full extent the reasons which noble lords had given for their own resignations, and the manner in which they had accounted for so remarkable a coincidence; but

he could not help expressing surprise that government had been able to go on so long; having been conducted, as it now appeared, by ministers, who did not think proper to communicate with each other on the most important question by which they could be interested.

CHAP.
LXV.
1827.

Other noble lords spoke with less decorum, and indulged in more personalities than the principal parties concerned: among these, lords Mansfield, Winchelsea, and Ellenborough were especially distinguished, though their hostility to ministers rested on distinct grounds; for lord Ellenborough, as a friend to catholic emancipation, thought their appointment was fraught with fatal injury to that question: nothing, he said, had advanced the catholic claims so much as discussion; yet now all discussion was to be abandoned. The other two peers expressed a determination of testing the principles of the new cabinet at once; and gave early notice of motions on the catholic question, as well as on the state of the nation; neither of these, however, was brought to a hearing; and the retired ministers exhibited as little concert when out of office, as they had displayed in their resignation: no systematic opposition was organised; no regular plan of tactics pursued; no leader of eminence selected: Mr. Peel kept studiously aloof from the inconvenience of being placed in such a situation; and the task of administering castigation to ministers fell principally on sir Thomas Lethbridge, who was unfortunately deficient in fluency of speech. Frequent interrogations were put to Mr. Canning, with a view of drawing out from him what was supposed to be the secret history of his administration; but he at last positively refused to give any answer, unless the matters aimed at were regularly brought forward by motion: there was consequently much vituperation, but very little elucidation of facts.

The same desultory system of hostility was pursued in the house of lords; but there the condemnation of the coalition was more loudly and vehemently expressed. The duke of Newcastle, in

CHAP.
LXV.

1827.

presenting a petition against the corn laws, called on every honest man and friend to the country, to assist in expelling from office 'the most profligate minister that ever was in power.' Lord Londonderry declared, that 'when he looked at the building which had been erected, he found it divested of all its main pillars, and constructed merely of a sort of rubbish: the artificer had shown great dexterity in forming it; nor could he have found out such a mass of *rubbish* in any other quarter, composed as it was of the two parties: he had made a dexterous effort to un-whig a portion of the whigs, and to un-tory a part of the tories.' Lord Goderich acknowledged the compliment paid to himself; but lord King, in a happier mood, retorted on the noble marquis, by informing him, 'that every person practically acquainted with building, understands by the term rubbish, that portion of the materials which is *sent away*.' The most powerful assistance, however, on the side of the seceders, was found, where they little expected it, in lord Grey; who, determining 'to stand by his order,' formally announced his want of confidence in the new ministry: though he gave to the members of his party, coalescing with that ministry, credit for disinterestedness, he could see nothing in it which called for his support: it was said to be formed on the principle of lord Liverpool's administration; but that consisted in an exclusion of the catholic question: was this then, he asked, the principle of the present government? Was the catholic question to be prohibited as a cabinet measure? If so, his determination was taken. The whole political career of the new premier was then reviewed by his lordship, who expressed himself opposed to every part of it; and Mr. Canning's noted declaration of calling into existence the republics of the new world was attacked with considerable severity. But he was said to be a friend to civil and religious liberty: true, he supported catholic emancipation, and at the same time proclaimed his opposition to a repeal of the test and corporation acts: he would not dwell on his known

opposition to parliamentary reform; for that question, it must be admitted, had not been so uniformly supported, nor had it public opinion so strongly in its favor, as that any one should make it a *sine qua non*, in joining an administration: but he could not conceal from himself the fact, that within a few years, numerous laws had been passed hostile to civil liberty, every one of which had received the right honorable gentleman's assent; and unless he could retrace his steps, and erase some that still remained in the statute-book, no confidence ought to be reposed in him as a friend to civil liberty. Nothing could be farther from his (lord Grey's) intention, than to combine with the opponents of government, from whom he differed, on most questions, as widely as the poles were asunder; neither could he join those who supported it: the only course therefore left to him was, to pursue the same principles which he had professed through life; and when he found the measures of ministers agreeing with those principles, to give them his support; when repugnant, to meet them with his opposition. 'This,' says Mr. Wallace, 'was an unexpected and serious blow; for it shook public confidence in the new arrangements: it was such a blow, as lord Chatham, by a deliberate formal declaration of the same kind, gave to the first Rockingham administration. The two cases had a striking resemblance: both ministries were partial conquests over an exclusive and vicious system of government; both had to contend with a court oligarchy, and an adverse bias in the mind of the sovereign; in both cases there was a present compromise of principles with a view to their future triumph; while a certain analogy of public station and personal character warranted the supposition, that lord Grey, like lord Chatham, was influenced by personal ambition and impatient pride: the effect, however, was chiefly felt by his own party, the whig allies of Mr. Canning: the uncompromising consistency, high ground, and stately solitude of lord Grey, gave a seeming air of littleness and desertion to those who

CHAP. had left his side to group themselves behind the new
LXV. minister.³

1827.

Soon after Mr. Canning's elevation, the king's declaration to the archbishop of Canterbury and bishop of London, 'that he was opposed as firmly as his father had been to the pretensions of the papists,' was made public to a meeting of prelates at Lambeth palace, and announced in the house of lords: it became evident therefore that this was a measure not to be forced. Repeal of the test and corporation acts was another subject, with a compromise of which the whigs were reproached; but neither was this urgent: so that every question, which could have brought any party in this coalition to the test, and discovered how far they were inclined to compromise their opinions on matters concerning which great difference was known to exist among them, was avoided: and under such circumstances, some of them took office, near the close of the session, when the minister became more firmly seated: thus lord Lansdowne was appointed secretary for the home department; lord Carlisle, privy seal; and Mr. Tierney, master of the mint. The whigs, in fact, being too weak to carry the measures which they most anxiously desired, determined to wait their time, until the power of that minister, who had loosened the bands of tory domination, should be consolidated; it was therefore thought prudent to drop all questions which might bring his strength to a test too rude: they never professed to abandon catholic emancipation, the repeal of the test and corporation acts, or parliamentary reform: it was only to secure ultimate success for those measures, that they resolved not to press them immediately, while they supported a premier, who, in some respects, was opposed to them. This appeared the only method of breaking up that immense power which the tory party had acquired, and of introducing eventually what they considered improvements in our social system: their policy was marked out by the peculiarity of their situation.

³ History of George IV. vol. iii. p. 309.

The opposition also now received a more regular form and abler direction; when Mr. Peel, laying aside the tone of moderation and urbanity which he had previously assumed, gave indications of a decidedly hostile spirit; on which occasion, Mr. Canning declared, that 'he rejoiced to see the standard openly raised; since he always preferred direct hostility to hollow professions or pretended neutrality;' and the cheers with which this declaration was received, showed the progress of liberal opinions among the commons of Great Britain.

In the house of lords, however, where the tories were more numerous and more adroit, the new corn bill, which had been sent up before the recess, furnished them with an opportunity of triumph. Although this measure had originated in the late cabinet, and came recommended by the approbation of lord Liverpool, an amendment was moved by the duke of Wellington, for which he professed to have the sanction of Mr. Huskisson; prohibiting the removal of foreign corn from bond until the price of wheat should have reached sixty-six shillings a quarter;⁴ and this proposal, though completely at variance with the principle of the bill, which provided for the admission of corn at all times on payment of a duty proportionate to the averaged market price, was supported by the high tory party, as well as by many peers, who preferred their own interests as landowners to any considerations of commercial policy; so that ministers were left in a minority of 122 to 133; and the bill, when returned to the commons thus shackled, was eventually rejected: but as some expedient became necessary to prevent a recurrence of that alarm which had arisen last year, on account of scarcity, a temporary bill was prepared, and suffered to pass both houses, permitting the release of foreign corn from bond, on the same scale of duties as that proposed by the measure just abandoned.

⁴ A misunderstanding and long correspondence on this subject arose between the duke and Mr. Huskisson; the latter of whom declared, that the consent given by him applied only to corn already in bond, or that might be in bond, when the law came into operation; a permanent restriction, like that contained in the amendment, never having been contemplated by him.

CHAP.
LXV.
—
1827.
Financial
statements.

On the first of June, Mr. Canning brought forward the statement of supplies, &c., in his new character as minister of finance. The public accounts, though presenting few novel features, were prepared and explained with a degree of ability and candor, which secured the confidence of the house and of the country: by a review of income and expenditure during the last four years, it appeared, that on an expenditure of £230,000,000, including the annual sinking fund of £5,000,000, there was an apparent deficiency of £1,265,687; but against this was to be placed the amount of advances from the exchequer, either in loans to carry on public works, or for beneficial purchases, which the public had in possession as available securities for repayment: the amount of excess in the advances for the four years was near £2,000,000; so that in fact there remained, as a real surplus of income beyond expenditure, something more than £1,100,000. The minister having suggested the propriety of providing for this temporary deficiency by an issue of exchequer bills, his proposal was readily admitted; and the supplies for the year, amounting to £57,500,000, including the sinking fund, were voted without opposition.

Corrupt
boroughs.

As is usual in the first session of a new parliament, the reports of election committees disclosed scenes of gross corruption. Colonel Maberly and Mr. Sykes brought before the house samples of this from the boroughs of Northampton and Leicester, where enormous sums, abstracted from corporation funds, had been expended in defraying the expenses of candidates; but such an application of public money was defended by Mr. Peel, and motions for committees of inquiry were negatived by considerable majorities: two boroughs, however, appeared so pre-eminent in dishonesty, that the most determined advocates of the old system could not wholly ward off retributive justice. A petition had been put in against the return for Penryn; and though corrupt practices could not be traced to the sitting members, yet such enormities were disclosed, that Mr. Legh Keck, chairman of the committee, was impelled by a sense of duty to bring forward certain

resolutions, in which he was supported by the whole house, with the exception of the sitting members; and even they rather asserted their own personal purity, than denied the actual existence of the alleged corruption. Mr. Keck's motion was accordingly assented to; and a bill was brought in for the more effectual prevention of bribery and corruption in that borough, which had received some very severe rebukes in the years 1807 and 1819. A difference of opinion prevailed regarding the remedy to be applied, or the punishment inflicted: Mr. Keck himself proposed, not the disfranchisement of the borough, but merely an extension of its elective franchise to the adjoining hundreds; while lord John Russell wished the example of disfranchisement set in the case of Grampound to be followed up, and the elective privileges of Penryn transferred to some populous and unrepresented town: he therefore moved, as an amendment, 'that the borough be excluded hereafter from returning burgesses to serve in parliament:' the original motion was supported by the ministry; for Mr. Canning himself thought a verdict of guilty must be given, although sufficient guilt had not been proved to warrant extreme punishment: the amendment, however, supported by lord Althorp, lord Milton, Mr. Brougham, and others, who declared that mercy to Penryn would be extreme injustice to every other disfranchised borough, and that a transfer of its privileges to the adjoining hundreds would merely bestow them on a few wealthy individuals, was carried by a majority of 124 to 69.

With regard to East Retford, the election had been declared void, on evidence of general and notorious bribery; the house accordingly resolved, that no writ should issue until that evidence had been taken into consideration: the result was, that leave was given for a bill of disfranchisement; and, as Manchester was generally looked to as a recipient of the forfeited privileges of Penryn, so Birmingham was contemplated as the place to which those of East Retford might be transferred: the session however closed before any efficient proceedings took place with regard to either

CHAP.
LXV.
1827.

of these boroughs; yet the facts elicited by investigation disclosed a scene of extensive corruption; and the conduct of that tory party which favored the old system, and which, by screening or palliating such corruption, prevented the transfer of their forfeited privileges to towns which had a strong claim to parliamentary representation, brought the question of reform in the house of commons almost to a close. Nothing can be more unjust toward the whigs, than to accuse them of precipitating that measure, or of designing to introduce into the constitution changes so extensive as those which ultimately were effected: their constant aim and their reiterated efforts were to reform parliament gradually; to punish known instances of corruption; and gradually to extend the elective franchise, until it comprehended a larger portion of our population, and satisfied those whose voice could be no longer stifled: but their opponents constantly met them with all the obstacles and prejudices which arise from self-interest, as well as a mistaken view of the constitution: and perhaps there never was a doctrine which did more injury to the cause of its professors, than that which converted the elective franchise, a sacred trust given to a portion of the community for the benefit of all, and which in its origin was thought a burden rather than a privilege, into a species of private property, convertible to the direct profit of those in whom it was invested, to be dealt with as tenderly, and paid for as punctually, as the land which descends to a person from his ancestors. The pernicious effects and special deformity of this doctrine, when carried out to its full extent, were perceived in many of those Augean stables, which were subsequently swept out by the besom of municipal reform.

Improve-
ment of
criminal
code.

Mr. Peel, though he had resigned office, still proceeded with his unostentatious improvements of the criminal code; and five acts passed, which consolidated into one body the whole law regarding offences against property, purified from an incredible quantity of ancient rubbish, and advantageously simplified in all its

arrangements. The first of these five acts repealed about 137 different statutes, wholly or in part, commencing with the charter *de foresta* of Henry III.: the second removed doctrines, which had been hitherto an encumbrance to the statute book, or laid down general rules applicable to the whole criminal code: it intirely abolished the benefit of clergy in cases of felony; appointed certain punishments for offences to which no special statute affixed any particular penalty; relieved the discharged prisoner from severe official expenses; and purified our law from a load of obscure verbiage: the third contained the law of offences against property in its new and simplified form; bringing the various species of crime into one view; assigning to each its plain description, with its precise punishment; and removing distinctions which had often given origin to embarrassing doubts: it abolished the distinction between grand and petty larceny; defined clearly the crime of burglary; while it cleared away many subtilties regarding 'possession,' and the 'conversion of possession,' in the law of embezzlement, as well as in the wire-drawn distinctions of larceny and fraud; it also mitigated the rigor of the penal law, while it recognised four classes of punishments, in the first of which only was that of death; those crimes being plainly set forth to which each was applicable: the fourth of this series of statutes comprised offences which consist, not in feloniously appropriating the property of another, but in maliciously injuring it; and while it reserved capital punishment for arson, for the demolition of buildings or machinery by rioters, for showing false lights to a vessel, &c., it left other kinds of injury to be repaid by transportation or imprisonment: altogether, the number of capital offences was considerably diminished; in many cases also a summary mode of procedure was introduced, to save various petty offenders, or supposed offenders, from long imprisonment, before the charges against them could be brought before a grand jury: the last statute regulated the redress to be sought from the hundred by persons whose property had been injured

CHAP.
LXV.

1827.

during riots, and laid down the mode of applying for such remuneration.

The close of this session, on the second of July, was soon followed by a public calamity, which again dismembered the government, and disappointed all those hopes, which the genius and enlightened principles of Mr. Canning had raised in the British nation. Parliament had no sooner separated, than this able minister issued orders to the heads of different departments, that they should transmit to him accurate and detailed accounts of the expenses connected with their several establishments, with a view to the reduction of our national burdens: on the fifteenth of July he became seriously indisposed; but after a few days of rest, he determined to resume his official duties, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his medical attendants: on the twenty-fifth, he retired, for change of air, to the beautiful seat of the duke of Devonshire at Chiswick; but the fatigues and cares of office, with the desertion and bitter hostility of his late colleagues, acting on a frame naturally irritable, and enfeebled by recent illness, hastened his dissolution, just when the ebullition of that hostility was contributing to elicit his genuine constitutional principles. His disease terminated in a severe inflammation of the bowels; and, after suffering excruciating tortures, he breathed his last, on the eighth of August, in the same room where his great predecessor, Charles James Fox, expired: he was buried in Westminster Abbey, at the foot of Pitt's grave; and his funeral, though private, was attended by a large concourse of noble and estimable personages, among whom there was scarcely one, to whom the illustrious deceased was not endeared by the ties of relationship, or by the recollections of friendship and kindness.

Death of
Mr. Can-
ning.

Character
of Mr.
Canning.

The public character of Mr. Canning was clearly seen in the altered policy of our government, both foreign and domestic, during his connexion with the Liverpool administration: his ambition, like that of Chatham, to whom as a minister and statesman he bore the nearest resemblance, became lofty and impe-

rious, but directed to noble ends; to the glory of his own country, and the advancement, through her greatness, of other nations: his anxiety was, that all should benefit, not only by her commercial prosperity, but by the blessings of her constitution; and when he was constrained to wield her thunders, it was only to check the spirit of despotic tyranny, and to keep Great Britain in her natural sphere, as protectress of those who aspired to freedom. He exhibited a splendid contrast to certain characters that succeeded him; who, having entered on public life as the advocates of liberal and patriotic sentiments, degenerated into bigoted defenders of antiquated opinions, and selfish supporters of intolerable abuses: Mr. Canning, on the contrary, though party introduced him into the senate, and tory principles, as well as a subtle and intriguing spirit, long secured to him a place in administration, gradually imbibed, and became insensibly influenced by, the free spirit of our noble constitution; until at length, enlightened by experience, he cast off the trammels of that oligarchy, with which early ambition had associated him, but to which he owed no natural allegiance: being determined to uphold the noble fabric reared by our forefathers, he contemplated with horror any attempt to endanger its foundation, or to alter its character; but when he found that the principles which he once professed began to threaten its safety, he abandoned them as far as he thought expedient; and, conciliating his political opponents without submitting to their dictation, he availed himself of their assistance to carry on his measures of regeneration. England regretted in him the most accomplished orator that the enlightened spirit of the age had yet produced; and the liberal portion of Europe mourned over the loss of his moral influence, as a calamity to the world at large: the effects of his death were almost immediately felt in the affairs of Portugal, and the settlement of those great political interests, which were involved in the independence of Greece, and the impending rupture between Russia and the Porte: the administration, however, which Mr. Canning had

CHAP.
LXV.

1827.

Adminis-
tration of
lord Gode-
rich.

formed, resolved that they would attempt to conduct the government without any other change, except that distribution of offices, which his lamented death made necessary: lord Goderich therefore became first lord of the treasury; being succeeded by Mr. Huskisson, as head of the colonial department; while the duke of Wellington, heedless of public opinion, which knew not how to reconcile his resumption of office with the declaration that personal pique had no influence on his resignation, yielded to the earnest request of his sovereign, and accepted the command of the army, but without a seat in the cabinet. The place of chancellor of the exchequer was still vacant; and was understood to have been declined by Messrs. Huskisson and Tierney, because they wished for the appointment of lord Althorp; but the nomination of Mr. Herries, a treasury clerk, brought up in the Vansittart school, and in the decided interest of the tories, took all the whig members of the cabinet by surprise. Lord Lansdowne, understanding that this selection was made at the dictation of the king, tendered his resignation: on being assured, however, that the recommendation came from lord Goderich himself, and being graciously requested by his majesty, who was anxious to avoid the fatigue of new arrangements, not to precipitate a dissolution of the present ministry, his lordship consented to retain office; but though he wished to strengthen his own party by introducing lord Holland into the administration, this suggestion was overruled.

It soon became manifest, that the cabinet had lost, with its great leader, all those preservative qualities which it once possessed; and lord Goderich, a man of unquestionable integrity, who, like the Roman emperor, would have been thought worthy of power had he not obtained it, showed himself lamentably deficient in that energy, judgment, and firm resolution, which was wanted to keep together the discordant elements of his administration: this plainly appeared, when he proposed to redeem a pledge given by his predecessor, to appoint a committee for the investigation and reform of our finances, in the ensuing session. As it became

necessary to fix on a chairman for this important measure, Mr. Tierney, the most active member in the whig section of the cabinet, proposed lord Althorp, as a man whose honor and independence were unimpeachable: lord Goderich expressed no objection; but, observing that the appointment principally concerned the house of commons, referred Mr. Tierney to Mr. Huskisson, its ministerial leader; and no objection having been made in that quarter, lord Althorp was applied to, and his consent obtained: the subject, however, by some oversight or intention, had not been mentioned to Mr. Herries, who, as chancellor of the exchequer, was more immediately concerned in the proposed investigation; and who naturally felt himself intitled to have the initiative in affairs connected with his own department: but it was only on the twenty-eighth of November, that Mr. Herries, calling at the colonial office, accidentally saw a list of the committee and its chairman, drawn out by Mr. Tierney: on the subject being discussed, the chancellor of the exchequer was thought to have acquiesced in the appointment; but subsequently, speaking in his place, he denied this to have been the case; declaring, that, with unfeigned respect for the private character of lord Althorp, he objected to his nomination as chairman of the finance committee: at all events, not more than twenty-four hours elapsed, before he saw lord Goderich, and informed him, that, after maturely considering lord Althorp's political views, and decided opinions on finance, he must resign office, if it were determined to persevere in the appointment: on the other hand, the retention of Mr. Huskisson, who considered himself pledged to lord Althorp, became involved in the question, and occasioned no little annoyance to the premier: about the same time also, news of the victory of Navarino came to embarrass still farther this distracted ministry; so that lord Goderich, wearied with his situation, and estranged, as it was said, from ambition by the loss of an only child, determined to resign: accordingly, on the eighth of January, he went down to Windsor, laid his difficulties before the king, and

CHAP.
LXV.

1827.

Duke of
Wellington's admi-
nistration.

dissolved an administration, to which his majesty declared he would have been true, if its members had been true to themselves.

After some unsuccessful attempts to supply lord Goderich's place, the duke of Wellington was commissioned to reconstruct the cabinet; and, with the exception of lord Eldon, who was at length invalided, the Liverpool party was recalled to the sweets of office. His grace himself, relinquishing the post of commander-in-chief to lord Hill, presided over the treasury; Mr. Peel succeeded lord Lansdowne in the home department; and lords Bathurst and Ellenborough became respectively president of the council, and keeper of the privy seal; viscount Melville and the earl of Aberdeen were made president of the board of control, and chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; while lord Lyndhurst as chancellor, Mr. Huskisson and earl Dudley as colonial and foreign secretaries, lord Palmerston as secretary at war, and Mr. C. Grant as president of the board of trade, all retained their seats in the present arrangement: Mr. Goulburn succeeded Mr. Herries as finance minister; but the removal of this latter gentleman to the mastership of the mint was considered by the whigs as a proof that he had undertaken his former office from other motives than qualification or choice: all circumstances however considered, that party had much more reason to complain of their own colleague, Mr. Tierney: the friends of the late minister, especially Mr. Huskisson, lost character with the public by thus clinging to place; as did Mr. Scarlett for casting aside his whig principles to obtain it;⁵ but the duke of Wellington, who had taken office, notwithstanding his own declaration of aversion and incapacity, soon showed that the latter disqualification at least was visionary.

While the Goderich administration was tottering to

⁵ 'Poor Wetherell,' says lord Eldon (*Life*, vol. iii. 27), 'who gallantly resigned the office of attorney-general as a sacrifice to his principles and friends, and who, if he had kept it would have had a high law office, is sacrificed to Scarlett, who is a whig, and who has been in violent opposition to all the administrations of which I have been a member.' The sop however now thrown to this political Cerberus, stifled all his barking against tory corruptions; into which he soon plunged with the desperate energies of a renegade.

its fall, the foreign policy bequeathed to it by Mr. Canning occasioned difficulties, with which his feeble successors were incompetent to contend. In the present complicated relations subsisting between European states, it is always difficult, and often impossible, to unravel the thread of general politics: but as far as regards the interference of christian powers in the affairs of Greece, under Mr. Canning's auspices, the common cause of humanity seems to have had more influence than usual on diplomatic counsels: not only the commerce of the Levant was destroyed by the present state of warfare, but all christendom was scandalised by the atrocious cruelties, which the Turks exercised on those whom they designated as rebels against their authority: such a state of things could not be suffered any longer to exist; yet it is doubtful how far the sympathy of British, and especially of French statesmen, would have carried them, had they not received intimation, that the emperor Nicholas was preparing to step in at the very crisis, when the horrors inseparable from a reconquest of Greece would have sanctified his ambition in the eyes of Europe. Teased by importunity, and desirous of abridging unpleasant discussions, the Reis Effendi put into writing the ultimatum of the Porte, and sent it on the tenth of June to all the christian legations: this paper, though obscured by an oriental prolixity of style, contained much acute reasoning, which could hardly be refuted on the common principles of diplomacy, while it announced the sultan's firm resolution to prevent that irreparable breach in his European dominion, which the acknowledgement of Grecian independence would produce; so that the only option left to mediating powers, was that of desisting from their project, or supporting it by an armed force: accordingly, on the reception in London of this Turkish note, the celebrated treaty of the sixth of July, 1827, was signed by the plenipotentiaries of Great Britain, France, and Russia. It contained only one stipulation that was not embodied in the protocol of St. Petersburg; namely, that the Greeks should

CHAP.
LXV.

1827.

Review
of foreign
policy.

CHAP.
LXV.
1327.

become possessors of the landed property situated in their own islands and mainland, on the condition of indemnifying its Mussulman proprietors: an additional article provided, that if, within the term of one month, the Ottoman Porte did not accept their intervention, the high contracting powers would establish commercial relations with Greece, and order the admirals commanding their naval forces to impose an armistice on the belligerents. Instructions, drawn up by common consent, authorised those commanders to prevent the transmission of troops and supplies from Turkey or Egypt to Greece; but enjoined them studiously to avoid hostilities, unless the Turks should try to force a passage: at the same time, while despatches were sent to the ambassadors at Constantinople, and to the Greek government, colonel Caradoc set out on a mission to Alexandria, for the purpose of persuading the pasha to withdraw his Egyptian army. As it was arranged that a combined fleet should give effect to these resolutions, two line-of-battle ships were sent from this country to reinforce sir Edward Codrington, whose flag was hoisted on board the *Asia* of eighty-four guns: the French government sent into the same seas four ships of the line; and admiral Siniavin arrived at Spithead with a Russian squadron of eight sail of the line and eight frigates; but his force being out of proportion to that of England or France, half of it returned to Cronstadt, and rear admiral count Heyden carried the remainder to join the confederates.

History scarcely records a public act more generally applauded throughout the civilised world, than the treaty of the sixth of July; but it was urged in vain by the christian ambassadors on the divan, as well as by the allied admirals on the Turkish commanders: the Reis Effendi would not deign to receive any such communication; and when a copy was left on his sofa, he pertinaciously refused to answer it, or to admit any explanations: the Russian minister now proposed to starve the divan into compliance by a joint blockade of the Bosphorus and Hellespont; when the French

minister stated the ready concurrence of his court: but lord Dudley, as if to show how feeble hands can mar the projects of combined wisdom and moderation, objected, on the part of England, to such a step, as too violent; and this objection led to the quick destruction of the Turkish navy: had Mr. Canning fortunately lived, he would no doubt have adapted his ulterior measures to the exigency of circumstances; and would probably have acquiesced in prince Lieven's suggestion, as the surest means of stifling the flames of war. In the mean time, the Turks could not comprehend what secret spell it was, which linked France and England with that great northern power, to whose schemes of aggrandisement they had been constantly opposed; and thus, while three of the four cabinets were agitated with doubt and apprehension, they were suddenly startled in this state of suspense by ominous sounds proceeding from the bay of Navarino.

In that harbor, celebrated for one of the most remarkable incidents in ancient history, the Turkish and Egyptian fleets were blockaded by the combined squadrons of England, France, and Russia, under the chief command of sir Edward Codrington. The Greeks had readily accepted an armistice under the treaty; while Ibrahim Pasha not only refused its terms, but aggravated all those miseries of war which the unhappy country had experienced at his hands; burning whole villages, after he had massacred their inhabitants; and cutting down vineyards and olive-trees, in which the principal riches of the nation consisted: irritated by such conduct, the allied admirals determined to enforce the armistice on this marauder; but if they thought the presence even of their formidable armament calculated to produce submission from the Turks, they greatly mistook the character of that people. About noon, on the twentieth of October, the combined fleets prepared for action, without professing hostile intentions, and steered into the bay; the British squadron leading; the French, under admiral de Rigny, following it; and the Russians bringing up the rear. The Mahometans, who were on the alert, and had

CHAP.
LXV.
— — — — —
1827.

Battle of
Navarino.

CHAP.
LXV.

1827.

drawn up their flotilla in a crescent with springs on the cables, immediately made up their minds that the allies came to attack them; and the Capitana Bey observed to his colleagues—‘The die is now cast: I told you the English would not be trifled with:’ such being the disposition on both sides, a conflict was inevitable. With regard to the respective strength of the antagonists, that of the allies amounted to twenty-six ships, carrying 1324 guns; and that of the Turks to seventy-nine ships of war, armed with 2240 guns, beside those in the formidable batteries on shore: but as the Mussulmen had only three two-deckers, and their opponents had ten sail of the line, the latter can hardly be said to have fought at a disadvantage. The fire commenced on the enemy’s side; for when the British admiral despatched one of his pilots to the flag-ship of the Turkish commander, expressing an earnest desire to avoid all effusion of blood, the messenger was wantonly shot at, and killed; nor was it long before the same vessel fired also into the Asia, which promptly returned the compliment: the conflict then became general; and though at sea it would probably have been quickly decided, it now raged four hours, and was carried on with great obstinacy and slaughter. The English bore the brunt of the engagement, and sustained the greatest loss; the French nobly emulating their skill and valor; while the Russians, who had to contend against the batteries, displayed equal courage, though their fire was not so well directed: the first named had seventy-five killed, including captain Bathurst of the Genoa, and one hundred and ninety-seven wounded: the Russians had fifty-seven killed, and one hundred and thirty-seven wounded, the Azoff, bearing count Heyden’s flag, losing more than any other single ship: of the French, forty-three were killed, and one hundred and seventeen wounded; making the sum total six hundred and twenty-six put *hors de combat*. The scene of wreck and devastation on the side of the Turks was such as had never been witnessed since the battle of Lepanto: of about one hundred and twenty men of

war and transports, no less a number than sixty-two were burnt, sunk, or driven on shore; while it was computed that near six thousand men perished in the action: the allies took no prizes, and detained no prisoners; but they saved many Turkish sailors, swimming in the bay or floating on spars. Ibrahim Pasha, who was absent on a military excursion, returned in time to see the shattered and smoking remains of his fleet, as it was said, with a certain degree of complacency; for the catastrophe, afflicting as it might be to his father and the sultan, extricated him from the dilemma in which he was placed, between his sovereign's orders, and the mandate of the three greatest European powers: when the battle was over, the admirals entered into a fresh correspondence with the Turkish commanders; and as it was agreed that hostilities should cease, the allied fleet quitted Navarino on the twenty-fifth. Most of the ships were crippled; and while they went generally into their own ports to refit, de Rigny, proceeded to Smyrna in the Trident, in order to protect the Europeans settled at that place. The sultan received the news of this disaster without dismay or loss of temper, though he demanded reparation for what he called a flagrant violation of the law of nations; but with a remarkable approach to the usages of civilised society, he permitted the christian ambassadors to depart in safety, instead of sending them, as usual, to the Seven Towers: and this he did even though news arrived that colonel Fabvier, a French officer, and lord Cochrane, had landed on the isle of Scio, the scene of so many Turkish barbarities, and compelled the pacha with his troops to retire into the fortress: but he declared that intercourse with their respective courts must cease, until the latter should give satisfaction for these wrongs, and abandon all further interference in the affairs of Greece.

Throughout a great part of christendom, the report of the victory at Navarino diffused joy and gladness; but in Great Britain, the feeling of exultation was confined to a minority; for the tories generally exclaimed against this aggression on the forces of an

CHAP.
LXV.
1828.

ancient ally, as a wanton act of perfidy, and as forwarding the designs of the Russian autocrat; while ministers, ashamed of having calculated so ill the consequences of their interference, appeared thunder-struck by an event for which they ought to have been prepared, afraid to take a manly line of defence, and uncertain what course to pursue. After virtually pronouncing an opinion on the victory, by rewarding the officers who had achieved it, they despatched admiral sir John Gore to the Mediterranean for the purpose of collecting information; and thus gave their opponents a handle for taunting them with inconsistency: before the question, however, could be debated in parliament, lord Goderich's miserable and disjointed administration had fallen to pieces.

Meeting of
parliament.

When the houses assembled on the twenty-ninth of January, the principal topic in the speech delivered by royal commissioners, was an allusion to the late naval conflict; and, for the first time, a British victory was characterised as 'an untoward event:' nor can it be denied that it was a case of some perplexity, and might have been still more so, had the Ottoman government possessed the power necessary to support its demands: even as it was, that influence became weakened which Great Britain had long enjoyed in Turkey, and which was so beneficial to her commercial interests: but the men now in power hated Greece and her cause; nor were they so blinded even by admiration of despotic principles, as not to perceive the advantages which might accrue to Russia, in her future projects, from the destruction of the Ottoman navy, and from that diminution of confidence, which the sultan would henceforth feel toward his great western allies: but of all European states, none perceived more clearly or felt more deeply the progress of Russian interests, than the court of Vienna: the designs of the autocrat on Poland, his successes in Persia and the regions about the great Caucasian chain, but more especially the patient, steady aim of conquest with which his race have ever regarded the Byzantine throne;—in short, the whole scheme of

Russian policy, was weighed in all its bearings by prince Metternich, and became the chief pivot on which Austrian diplomacy might be said to turn. United to Russia by the ties of a common interest, as far as war against continental freedom is concerned, Austria still viewed the increasing power and aggrandisement of her mighty neighbor with extreme apprehension; and schemes for counteracting the ambitious projects of Pozzo di Borgo unceasingly occupied the penetrating and sagacious mind of Metternich. To events arising from this source of danger, as it regards the Austrian empire, Italy may perhaps look for the future recovery of her freedom; since the Italian provinces are to Austria, what Ireland is to Great Britain. But on what shall Austria herself, and the other German states, rely for protection against the leviathan of the north? On what, but the friendship and firm coalition of Great Britain and France? What other combination, humanly speaking, would avail to preserve the balance of European power, threatened in that direction?

In both houses of parliament, the language held by the royal commissioners regarding the victory of Navarino, was loudly denounced by opposition, as indicating intentions on the part of the Wellington cabinet to abandon the line of Mr. Canning's policy: but the usual addresses to the throne were carried without a division. The formation of the new ministry did not escape discussion; and on this occasion, Mr. Brougham, alluding to the unusual phenomenon of a military premier, made use of an expressive phrase, which has penetrated to every region where the English language is spoken. 'No man,' said the learned gentleman, 'values more highly than I do the services and genius of the noble duke as a soldier; but I do not like to see him at the head of the financial department of this country, with the full confidence of his sovereign, enjoying all the patronage of the army, church, and state; while he is also entrusted with the delicate function of conveying constant and confidential advice to his royal master: this condition of affairs

CHAP.
LXV.
1828.

strikes me as being very unconstitutional. I am indeed told, that the noble duke is a person of great vigor in council; and that his talents are not confined to the art of war: it may be so; but that does not remove my objections to his possession of so immense a mass of civil and military patronage. It is said, that the noble duke is incapable of speaking in public, as a first minister of the crown ought to speak: now I conceive that there is no validity in that objection; for I happened to be present, when the noble duke, last year, had the modesty and candor to declare, in another place, his unfitness for the situation of first minister; and I really thought I never heard a better speech in my life, or observed less want of capacity in any one who might be called on to take part in a debate: this therefore is not a reason with me for objecting to the appointment: my objection rests on the unconstitutional grounds which I have before stated, and on the experience of the noble duke being wholly military. Let it not, however, be supposed that I am inclined to exaggerate: I have no fear of slavery being introduced into this country by the power of the sword: it would demand a stronger man even than the duke of Wellington to effect that object: the noble duke might take the army and the navy, the mitre and the great seal—I will make him a present of them all: let him come on with his whole force, sword in hand, against the constitution; the people will not only beat him by their energies, but laugh at his efforts. There have indeed been periods when the country heard with dismay that ‘the soldier was abroad;’ but such is not the case now: let the soldier be ever so much abroad in the present age, he can do nothing: another power has arisen; another person, less important, nay, even insignificant in the eyes of some persons, has produced this state of things: *the schoolmaster is abroad*; and I trust more to the schoolmaster armed with his primer, for upholding the liberties of this country, than I fear lest the soldier in full military array should destroy them.’ All this was fine rhetoric, and did no discredit to Mr. Brougham’s genius; nor can the liberties of

our glorious constitution ever be watched too closely: but if there be a man covered with military glory, who has shown himself alive to the true liberties of his country, and to the preservation of its constitutional rights, that man is the duke of Wellington. We are not engaged now in canvassing particular parts of his policy, foreign or domestic; but the manner in which he has descended from a station, more exalted than that of monarchs, to take his stand among the supporters of the British constitution, to reform many of its abuses, and to extend its privileges, will demand the admiration of all ages: it is an example which has rarely been surpassed, and it stands prominent for the imitation of future warriors.

Much time was subsequently wasted in personal explanations, and angry discussion on the circumstances which led to the dissolution of the late cabinet; when the conduct of Mr. Huskisson and his party, in holding office under the new ministry, met with severe animadversion: a circumstance, however, which personally concerned that gentleman, soon paved the way to his dismissal, and to the resignation of his friends: this occurred during an election at Liverpool, where the honorable secretary affirmed, in one of his speeches, that he had obtained guarantees from the duke of Wellington, before he joined his administration. On the appearance of this assertion in the public papers, the duke instantly took fire, and contradicted it with indignant and contemptuous vehemence, in the house of lords; asking, what right Mr. Huskisson had to set himself up above any other member of the cabinet? The rebuke was met by that gentleman with a pitiful submission; his explanation of the meaning which he assigned to the word guarantee,—that of securing the co-operation of his friends, the earl of Dudley, lord Palmerston, and Mr. C. Grant in the cabinet,—was accepted; and there the affair rested for the present.

While these explanations were going on, that committee of finance, which had been so disastrous to the late administration, was appointed, on the motion of Mr. Peel, now the acknowledged leader of the commons:

CHAP.
LXV.
—
1828.

he introduced it with an able and comprehensive statement; whence it appeared, that a reduction of £48,608,000 had taken place in the funded and unfunded debt since 1815; while the actual sum of unredeemed debt amounted to £777,476,000: this being the total encumbrance, Mr. Peel next looked at the revenue and expenditure; and after going through their various items, he stated the income of last year at £49,581,000; the expenditure having been £49,487,00; leaving an excess of income equal to £94,000. As to the expenditure of the present year, the estimates were not yet completed; but, without binding himself down to extreme accuracy, they would be less than those of the preceding year by £1,168,260. After this general statement, he declared, that his colleagues and himself would willingly listen to any suggestions of the committee, for the appointment of which he was about to move; and he took that opportunity of pressing one subject particularly on its notice—a simplification of the public accounts, in imitation of France and America: a plan for the attainment of such an object would confer a lasting obligation on the state. The motion passed without any opposition, except that of Mr. Hume; who, having taken great pains to prepare a statement of the different branches of inquiry, declared that their proper investigation by one committee would occupy a period of two or three years; in proof of which, he instanced the last appointed, which was called sir Charles Long's committee; and which had been occupied five years with the customs and excise only: the finance committee made thirteen or fourteen reports; yet not one of them referred to many departments, into which he contended inquiry ought to be made; such as the crown lands, the hereditary revenues, the civil list, the expenses of our law courts and colonies: he therefore suggested the appointment of ten or eleven committees of finance, and described the different subjects which deserved attention: this plan however of dividing labor received no countenance, except from Mr. Brougham; who thought it might be judiciously adopted to a certain

extent, by the committee dividing itself into separate lists of seven members, if necessary: twenty-three persons were then named: their labors were multifarious and important; and among several suggestions for the national advantage, one of the first related to a discovery, that the public was regularly losing large sums, by the system on which government annuities had been granted. Mr. Herries had submitted to them a statement of the finances, which lord Althorp described as 'able, clear, and satisfactory;' whence it appeared that those annuities had been sold at a considerable loss: the evidence of this was found in certain calculations made by Mr. Finlayson, who was said to have communicated the fact to lord Bexley in 1819, and subsequently to lord Goderich; stating the rate of this loss to be £8000 a month, and to arise from a false calculation of the duration of life, as given in Dr. Price's tables: either these were originally inaccurate; or human life, in consequence of increased comforts, conveniences, and scientific aid, was extended to a longer period; and the truth of this statement soon appeared evident to the committee: nothing, however, could be done to alter those annuities which had been sold; though a bill was immediately brought in, to suspend the operation of the act under which they had been granted, until a more correct system should be arranged: in a report on the ordnance department, the abolition of the office of its lieutenant-general was recommended; but this proposition did not obtain the assent of ministers. Mr. Canning's widow was now raised to the peerage; and when the estimates of the year were presented, it was proposed to grant a pension of £3000 a year to his second son, as a provision for the family.⁶ The grant was confirmed by a large majority in the commons, though vehemently opposed by lord Althorp, sir Matthew Ridley, Messrs. Hume, Banks, P. Thompson, D. W. Harvey, and others; all of whom admitted the splendid talents of the late

⁶ The elder was engaged in the naval service of his country; and his life, therefore, was not thought safe: indeed, no long time elapsed before he was accidentally drowned.

CHAP.
LXV.
1828.

premier; though some objected to the grant on the score of economy, and several on the ground of its not having been deserved: this opposition, however, was generally thought illiberal and unjust; for Mr. Canning had spent, not only his life, but his fortune, in the public service. 'It should be known,' says an acute observer, 'in justice to those who hold the higher offices under the crown, that their salaries fall short of the expenses to which they are subjected, by the manners of our country, and a mischievous convention. Their gorgeous scale of living has the double effect of giving an example and impulse to extravagance through every department of the public service, and of securing (perhaps by design) to private wealth a monopoly of administration. A man vigilantly prudent might perhaps have lived within his income in Mr. Canning's situation; and it is known that he had no prodigal or expensive tastes: but it is also known that he had that utter carelessness of money, through which fortune is not less effectually dissipated.'⁷

Connected with financial arrangements, was a measure regarding the currency. The act of 1826 had prohibited the issue of any notes under five pounds in England; but the small notes of Ireland and Scotland had been spared; and it was now found that those of the latter country were getting into extensive circulation through the northern counties. As the object of parliament had been to substitute a metallic for a small paper currency, and on this account had restricted English bankers, it would have been both partial and inconsistent to have allowed free circulation to the notes of Ireland or Scotland: a motion therefore was made to prohibit the introduction of small Scotch notes, to be enforced by a fine summarily levied: the bill was opposed by those who had been hostile to the measure of 1826, but was carried by large and increasing majorities in all its stages: during the discussion it was stated, that £22,000,000 of gold was at this time circulating, and £8,000,000 of silver; also that a large quantity of specie was kept in reserve.

⁷ Wallace's History of George IV. vol. iii. p. 327.

The budget was opened by the new chancellor of the exchequer with a clearness and simplicity that disarmed opposition. After various statements, he declared, that the total ordinary revenue of the year 1828 might be estimated at £50,381,530; to which must be added £3,082,500, to be received from the trustees of military and naval pensions, together with miscellaneous payments of £438,000; making a grand total of £53,902,030: the expenditure would amount to the sum of £50,104,522, which, being deducted from the revenue, left a surplus of £3,797,508: from this, however, was to be taken the advances to public works £708,000; so that the clear surplus was only £3,088,708, instead of £5,000,000, to be applied as a sinking fund. To supply this deficiency by any increase of taxation, was generally acknowledged to be, under present circumstances, out of the question; so that it was agreed almost in silence to limit the sinking-fund to the amount of such a balance as might remain after the expenses of the year were liquidated.

CHAP.
LXV.

1828.

Financial
statement.

One of the most important questions debated during the session was a new settlement of the corn laws: the act now introduced was constructed on a graduated principle of ascending and descending duties, like that of Mr. Canning; but the medium price, or pivot, which was before taken at sixty shillings, was raised by the duke of Wellington to sixty-four: even this compromise did not satisfy the agriculturists in either house, whilst it increased the objections which the advocates of a free trade in corn had raised against the previous bill. Mr. C. Grant, who introduced the measure in the house of commons, hardly attempted its vindication; but declared that it was the best that could be framed in the existing conflict of interests and opinions. In this contest agriculture was very improperly considered as opposed both in its nature and objects to manufactures; while, in fact, it is itself a manufacture, and the most advantageous of all manufactures; for its profits are certain, and its employment healthy: moreover, all grain raised beyond the seed sown, adds the whole extent of such

CHAP.
LXV.
1828.

produce to the wealth, and the people employed in its production to the strength, of the state. The grand object of every good government, is to provide employment for industry; and the first point to be attended to in this respect is the manufacturing of the raw material produced by the country; for this is real wealth: hence agriculture must always prove the most useful kind of manufacture to every state. The fruits and productions of the soil, raised by labor and capital, are disseminated and divided among all classes, who exchange their labor for that of the agriculturist, until sustenance is obtained by all: it is this internal commerce which is so beneficial, and so important, from the rapidity of the exchange, and the stability of it, as far as every description of produce is consumed by the inhabitants of a country; and by no other means can manufacturers and tradesmen be so extensively injured, as by an oppression of the agricultural interest. On the contrary, it is but fair to observe, that a large party in the country took a very different view of this subject; considering that protective and prohibitory duties were delusive to the agriculturist who was thus taught to rely upon acts of parliament instead of depending on his own energy, skill, and capital; whilst they were particularly injurious to farming laborers, who are worse fed, worse clothed, worse housed, and worse educated, than any other class in England. This party, looking to the harvests and the commerce of future years, to our vast increase of population, whose prospective industry would demand for its support extended markets; looking also to the high destinies of Great Britain and the mighty power of its industrial resources, felt that a time was approaching, when she must either succumb in the contest with rival nations, or triumph successful over all, and become the grand mart of the whole earth.

Repeal of
test and
corporation
acts.

The measure of greatest public interest, however, carried at this time, was the repeal of the test and corporation acts. The grievances of the dissenters, whom those enactments were originally intended to

exclude from offices of trust and power, had become almost nominal, through the act of indemnity which was annually passed to relieve such as were subject to penalties; but the very semblance of a political disqualification is always viewed by loyal subjects as a degradation, if not an injury; and as the progress of liberal opinions seemed favorable to the attempt, a bill to repeal those obsolete laws, and to substitute a declaration in place of the sacramental test, was brought into the house of commons by that great advocate of civil and religious liberty, lord John Russell. Ministers were not blind to what would be the ulterior consequences of this measure, if successful; but it was useless to strive against the spirit of the age: after an abortive project of sir T. Acland for suspending instead of repealing the acts in question, as well as the rejection of Mr. Peel's proposition to take more time for consideration, lord John's motion was carried by a majority of 237 to 193, and against the influence of the cabinet; so that it became evident that its members must resign either their opinions or their places. They chose the former alternative: Mr. Peel said, he could not think of pressing his sentiments against those of the majority; government itself took up the measure; when it came into the house of lords under the protection of the premier, and was advocated with remarkable energy and talent by lord Holland: thus approved, it was generally supported by the spiritual peers, though strongly and consistently opposed as a revolutionary measure by the ex-chancellor Eldon, who declared that, much as he had heard of 'the march of mind,' he never expected to see it march into that house, with the duke of Wellington and the bishops at its head.⁸ After some vain attempts in committee to

⁸ In a letter to his daughter, unmindful of the advance of intellect or reason, and anticipating nothing but ruin from a measure which has tended wonderfully to mollify the spirit of dissent, the worthy old gentleman says, 'the administration have, to their shame be it said, got the archbishops and most of the bishops to support this revolutionary bill. I voted as long ago as the years 1787, 1789, and 1790 against a similar measure; lord North and Pitt opposing it as destructive of the church establishment.'—Life, vol. iii. p. 37.

CHAP.
LXV.

1828.

Catholic
claims.

narrow the principle of this bill, it passed through all its stages, and finally received the royal assent.⁹

The necessity of repealing these laws, as a consequence of granting the claims of Romanists, had been strenuously maintained and deprecated by the determined opponents of the latter measure: it was therefore with utter dismay that they saw the former carried, anticipating, as they did, its probable effects on the subject of catholic emancipation: nor was it long before that harassing question was again brought forward, with increased weight, by sir Francis Burdett, whose motion for a committee was carried by a majority of six: its deliberations, however, went no farther than to 'the expediency of considering the laws affecting Roman catholics, with a view to such an adjustment, as might conduce to the peace and strength of the empire, and to the stability of the established church.' Instead of forming resolutions in detail, it was determined to seek a conference with the lords, in order to ascertain whether their sentiments on the subject had undergone any change: this proposal was accepted, and the conference held on the nineteenth of May; when the resolution of the commons, after being read in the upper house, was ordered to be taken into consideration on the ninth of June. The debate lasted two days; but the proposition of the marquis of Lansdowne, 'that their lordships should concur in that resolution,' being strenuously opposed by Wellington, and the law lords Eldon, Colchester, Redesdale, and Manners, as well as by the bench of bishops, was lost by a majority of forty-four.

Early in the session, Mr. Brougham had directed attention to the state of our common law and its courts, in a speech which occupied six hours, and was remarkable for its variety of details: but though most men concurred in the opinion, that no subject was

⁹ 'The amendments,' says lord Eldon, 'that were carried in the house of lords were poor things—all that were good and necessary for the maintenance of church and state were negatived: so that the bill is, in my poor judgment, as *bad*, as *mischievous*, and as *revolutionary*, as the most captious dissenter would wish it to be.'—*Life*, vol. iii. p. 45.

more worthy of attention than the improvement of our law; yet the unbounded extent of Mr. Brougham's inquiry, in which the attorney and solicitor-general pointed out several fallacies and errors, seemed to preclude the possibility of effecting any good: in addition to this, it may be observed, that there is always found an antipathy in one party to what is proposed by the other: two commissions, however, issued; one to inquire into the state of the common law, and the other to take into consideration the law of real property.

CHAP.
LXV.
1828.

At the opening of this session, lord Londonderry, in his ardent admiration of the military premier, had announced the determination with which that premier would 'cut off the unsound parts of his government, if it should be attacked with the dry rot;' nor did a long period elapse before this prediction was verified. In the course of the session, bills were introduced into parliament, to disfranchise the corrupt boroughs of Penryn and East Retford: Penryn first engaged the attention of the commons; a bill, transferring its elective privileges to Manchester, being sent up to the house of lords; while the case of East Retford was allowed to stand over, since the decision of the commons respecting it might be materially affected by that of the peers on the former question. On the nineteenth of May, when the East Retford bill was again moved, there seemed to be so great a certainty that the Penryn bill would be rejected by the lords, that ministers, who had pledged themselves, only in case of two boroughs being thrown on their hands, to give the elective franchise to a town, considered themselves in fact as having but one borough to deal with: accordingly, all, with one exception, voted against transferring its privileges to Birmingham; favoring the claims of the adjoining hundred, though not without exciting strong suspicions of patronising 'a job,' for the benefit of a great borough proprietor. Mr. Huskisson, who had declared that he would vote, at all events, for the transfer to Birmingham, felt himself bound to redeem his pledge, and to divide against his

Division of
the cabinet.

CHAP.
LXV.

1828.

colleagues: this, no doubt, was an awkward occurrence; but as the intentions of government were somewhat obscure, few persons would have thought it important enough to affect his connexion with the administration: Mr. Huskisson himself however, in general a sound and sagacious politician, took a different view of the subject; and coming home from the house of commons about two o'clock in the morning, he addressed a letter to the duke of Wellington, marked 'private and confidential;' in which he said, his duty led him, 'without loss of time, to afford his grace an opportunity of placing his office in other hands:' the duke received this communication about ten; and without loss of time availed himself of the opportunity thus offered, by laying Mr. Huskisson's letter, as a resignation, before his majesty. For such prompt, straightforward conduct that gentleman was not prepared; and disappointed perhaps that his services were not solicited by the minister, he declared to lord Dudley, with whom he happened to be in conversation when his grace's answer arrived, that he had never intended to resign; and his letter was marked 'private:' in consequence, lord Dudley immediately waited on the premier, and attempted to pass the matter off as a mistake; but his grace maintained that it was to all intents and purposes a resignation; declaring, emphatically, 'it is no mistake; it can be no mistake; it shall be no mistake.' Mr. Huskisson had the weakness, after this decided repulse, to offer explanations through lord Palmerston; but without any better success: he then, with almost incredible pertinacity, addressed a written appeal to the duke, which led to a correspondence, and to the humiliating failure which he deserved. The premier was in fact glad of an occasion to relieve himself from a colleague, with whom he had several causes of pique, and with whose political principles his own did not wholly coincide: he was therefore inexorable; and the dismissal of Mr. Huskisson was followed by the resignation of lords Dudley and Palmerston, as well as of Mr. Charles Grant. Their places in the cabinet were

supplied by sir George Murray, who succeeded Mr. Huskisson; sir Henry Hardinge, who was made secretary at war; and Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, who took Mr. Charles Grant's place at the board of trade; while the seals of the foreign secretary were committed to that determined enemy of continental freedom, the earl of Aberdeen. It is not meant to deny that this nobleman's views may be directed to advance what he considers the political interests of his own country; but the Castlereagh school never produced a British statesman more indifferent to the oppression which any nation may undergo from the tyranny of despotic power. When, alas! will the period arrive, in which we shall see the cause of humanity inseparably connected with the policy of christian governments? when shall we see potentates and statesmen uniting to repress injustice, and to establish peace among men?

No farther change took place in our administration during the year, except that the duke of Clarence, from some disagreement with the premier, connected with the promotion of naval officers, and the large expenses incurred by his royal highness in costly journeys and marine exhibitions, resigned his post of lord high admiral; when a board was appointed on the old system, with lord Melville at its head; to the general dissatisfaction of the naval and military professions. In Ireland, a change of government became necessary toward the close of this year. Parliament was prorogued on the twenty-eighth of July; when two interesting subjects of foreign policy were introduced into the speech of the commissioners;—war between Russia and Turkey—and the suspension of our relations with Portugal. It may reasonably be supposed, from the character of Mr. Canning's policy, that the victory of Navarino, in his hands, would have had the effect of softening the barbarian councils of Turkey, by the only argument which its savage rulers comprehend; while his fearless energy, and his connexion with the liberal and enlightened portion of Europe, would have controlled the ambition of Russia. It is certain, that no statesman ever occasioned greater trouble and ap-

CHAP.
LXV.

1828.

prehension to that power; nor could any one take a more effectual method to thwart its views, than by placing Great Britain in a position to hold the balance in a struggle of political interests and opinions: but the duke of Wellington paralysed every effect of victory, and encouraged Turkish obstinacy, by what may be called an apologetic course of proceeding; while his foreign policy in general had neither the influence nor energy necessary to keep down Russian pretensions: so that Nicholas, detaching himself from the treaty of London, soon declared war against the Porte on his own account, for objects which were said to be wholly national.¹⁰

In Portugal affairs had taken a turn still more strange: the infatuated Don Pedro, supposing that a few months of foreign travel, together with a short residence in a German court, could erase the characters of malignant cruelty and perfidy inherent in his brother's disposition, named him regent of the kingdom; but not before Miguel had spontaneously sworn allegiance to him, as natural sovereign, as well as to the constitutional charter; and had also engaged on oath to deliver up the crown to Donna Maria II., as soon as that princess should be legally intitled to it. Under such circumstances, he quitted Vienna; and on his way to Lisbon, spent several weeks in England, where he met with a very distinguished reception; being abundantly caressed, not only by that small party in this country who had an object in disturbing the affairs of Portugal, but by all the members of government, and the aristocracy in general. During his sojourn in London, he resided at the house of earl Dudley in Arlington-street, which was assigned for his accommodation; and there he held several levees, giving audiences to foreign ambassadors and ministers: he was twice sumptuously entertained at the admiralty by the duke of Clarence; and, after visiting the king at Windsor, he proceeded to Plymouth, where he embarked, on the 20th of January, in a Portuguese

¹⁰ The chief pretext for the Russian declaration of war was the imperious behaviour of the Porte, in its delay to fulfil the treaty of Ackerman.

frigate. At his departure, this accomplished pet,¹¹ who was viewed with some suspicion, addressed a letter to the king, declaring that if, on his return to Portugal, he attempted any thing against the rights of his brother or niece, or against the constitution, '*he should be an usurper, and a perjured wretch*;' which character was scarcely drawn by his pen, before he hastened to assume it. On his arrival at Lisbon, his mother, a monster possessed by an innate and insane thirst of blood, resumed her influence over him; and after a series of intrigues and atrocities, the Cortes were dismissed, the charter was abolished, and Don Miguel proclaimed absolute king. Immediately, all the dungeons in the realm were filled with victims; thousands, who preserved their loyalty, and acknowledged the sanctity of an oath, ended their days in those loathsome dens, or perished on the scaffold; while immense numbers were banished to the desert coasts of Africa, or voluntarily abandoned their country, to endure all the sorrows of unmerited exile. Had Mr. Canning lived, this desperate assassin, who even attempted the life of his sister, would assuredly not have been sent back without some humane restrictions placed on his savage propensities: but the duke of Wellington was content to restore him on his bare *parole*; and lord Aberdeen thought that the insult which he had committed against the majesty of the British nation, his act of usurpation, and his abolition of the chartered liberties of his country, were all sufficiently avenged by the suspension of our diplomatic relations with Portugal: Don Pedro, by his ministers at Vienna and London, entered solemn protests against the violation of his hereditary rights and those of his daughter, whom he had despatched with a royal *cortège* to Europe. Her destination, in the first instance, was Vienna; but, on touching at Gibraltar, and learning the events which had occurred in Portugal, she took counsel with the principal officers in her suite, and by

CHAP.
LXV.

1828.

¹¹ His common amusement before he took to the killing of men, was to ride through the streets of Lisbon, armed with an iron rod, with which he killed the dogs that abounded in that noisome city.

CHAP.
LXV.

1828.

their advice directed her course to England; there, however, as she was much less acceptable to our tory ministers, she received much less notice than her uncle Miguel had obtained: yet the rights of this young princess to her throne were incontestable on every principle of legitimacy, had been admitted by the Portuguese nation, recognized by the European courts, and repeatedly sworn to by the wretch who now usurped them. With regard to George IV. at this period, he appeared almost as insensible to the dignity, as averse to the fatigues of royalty: he rarely met his parliament, or held a court; but, secluding himself totally from the view of his subjects, endeavored to banish politics from his thoughts, and to ward off ministerial changes, which might interfere with his ease or his voluptuous amusements: events, however, were nigh at hand, which, by threatening to disturb his tranquillity, occasioned the greatest revulsion which had yet taken place in his political principles.

Disturb-
ances in
Ireland.

No sooner had the present ministers assumed the reins of government, than Irish agitation, which gratitude or prudence had partially suppressed during the two previous administrations, instantly revived in all its force; for Wellington had ever been one of the most energetic opponents of catholic claims; and Peel was considered as representing the embodied resistance of the high church and tory party of England. In these two leaders, every protestant of the empire, averse to emancipation, firmly confided: accordingly, against them and their government the agitators raised a cry of war, while they proceeded to reorganise the catholic association: their efforts were openly seconded by the popish priesthood; and the first display of this united power, to use the expression of Mr. Shiel, 'made the great captain start.' It was exhibited in a contested election for the county of Clare, when Mr. O'Connell adopted the novel experiment of offering himself, though a catholic, as a candidate for the representation; broaching a new, but unfounded opinion, that even under the existing law he was not precluded from sitting in the house of commons; and pledging

himself, if he should be returned, to make the experiment. In this instance, although the protestant candidate, Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, was an advocate for emancipation, his speeches were considered only as a mockery, while the government to which he belonged was based on the principle of exclusion; and though he was supported by the great mass of landed proprietors and moderate men of all parties, yet the peasantry were impelled by their priests to vote for the grand agitator; who, in face of a protest, was declared duly returned, and who promised to demand his seat in the ensuing session.

This proof of catholic determination and power was only a prelude to farther manifestations of both: the association, when the restraining act expired, was reorganised on its old construction; and the name of agitators. applied to its leaders as a term of reproach and contumely, was accepted by the whole body as a title of honor. A plan was now formed and executed, with the aid and agency of the priests, to break that link which united the catholic forty shilling freeholders with their landlords: certain tests were framed, and resolutions adopted, to reject every candidate who should decline a pledge to oppose Wellington's administration, and to vote for parliamentary reform, as well as for a repeal of the sub-letting act: and while the peasantry, at the command of their masters, ceased, as it were mechanically, from habitual outrage and lawless violence, they assembled in large companies, regularly trained for the exertion of physical force, and anxious for its display whenever it might be required. The state of Ireland at this period was vividly, yet faithfully delineated, in the following description, given by one of her most eloquent sons:— 'Does not a tremendous organisation,' said Mr. Shiel, 'extend over the whole island? have not all the natural bonds, by which men are tied together, been broken and burst asunder? are not all the relations of society, which exist elsewhere, gone? has not property lost its influence? has not rank been stripped of the respect which should belong to it? and has not

CHAP.
LXV.

1828.

an internal government grown up, which, gradually superseding the legitimate authorities, has armed itself with a complete domination? Is it nothing, that the whole body of catholic clergy are alienated from the state; and that the catholic gentry, peasantry, and priesthood, are all combined in one vast confederacy? So much for catholic indignation while we are at peace; and when England shall be involved in war—I pause: it is not necessary that I should discuss that branch of the division, or point to the cloud, which, charged with thunder, is hanging over our heads.'

As the year advanced, the state of the country assumed a new and still more fearful aspect; for the protestants, becoming irritated by virulent language of the principal agitators, alarmed at the menacing attitude of their followers, and disgusted by the apparent apathy of the British government, began to unite in self-defence: provincial Orange lodges were now re-opened, with the grand lodge in Dublin as the centre of operations; while new associations, under the title of Brunswick clubs, including in their lists the most influential classes, contributed to break up society into parties, for the more extended indulgence of mutual animosity: the protestant clubs had an extensive sway throughout the northern counties, as the catholic association was dominant in those of the south: to the former, therefore, where the organisation of the Romanists proceeded more slowly, an apostle of agitation was sent, in the person of Mr. Lawless: that itinerant orator, traversing the different districts from parish to parish, not only collected together the catholics in their chapels, where he inflamed them by every possible incentive, but entered the towns at the head of immense multitudes; until at length the protestants also came out to prevent his progress, and serious riots took place: then the association, beginning to fear that it had gone too far, by exciting in one part of the country a spirit difficult to be controlled, and creating in another successful opposition, instead of that silence which is produced by dismay,

issued a proclamation, exhorting the peasants to desist from meeting in large bodies; and the ominous obedience shown to this mandate left nothing for a subsequent proclamation of the lord lieutenant to effect: the assemblies had disappeared before he ventured to call them in question. Amid this fearful state of illegal organisation and impending anarchy, the only remarkable declaration which ministers substituted for active measures, consisted in a private letter sent by the duke of Wellington to Dr. Curtis, catholic primate of Ireland; in which, while he expressed great anxiety to witness the settlement of the question, and confessed that he saw no prospect of such a consummation, he observed, with a kind of studied obscurity, 'if we could bury it in oblivion for a short time, I should not despair of a satisfactory result.' Dr. Curtis having communicated this enigmatical epistle to the lord lieutenant, the opinion pronounced by his excellency was decidedly of an opposite nature. 'I differ,' said he, 'from the duke, with respect to burying the question for a short time in oblivion;—first, because the thing is utterly impossible; and next, if it were possible, I fear advantage might be taken of the pause, by representing it as a panic achieved by the late violent re-action; and by proclaiming, that if government peremptorily decided against concession, the catholics would cease to agitate: then all the miseries of Ireland would be re-acted. I therefore recommend that the measure should not for a moment be lost sight of; that anxiety should continue to be manifested; that all constitutional means should be adopted to forward the cause, consistent with patient forbearance and submissive obedience to the laws; that the catholics should trust to the justice of that cause, and to the growing liberality of mankind; but should not desist from *agitation*.' For this advice, which was afterwards made public with the lord lieutenant's consent, he is said to have been recalled in displeasure by the premier: but dates, together with subsequent explanations and events, seem to indicate other motives for this determination;

CHAP.
LXV.

1828.

Death of
the earl of
Liverpool.

and lord Anglesea himself is reported to have divined the true reason of his dismissal. 'I know the duke,' he said; 'his mind is made up to emancipate the catholics; and I am recalled, because he would have no one to share his victory:' at all events, the latter part of the old year was employed by administration in testifying their repugnance to a measure, which it was their first act in the new year to introduce.

On the fourth of December, the earl of Liverpool expired at Combe Wood, after various fluctuations in his health; though not the slightest prospect of recovery had appeared since his first attack. Seldom has it happened, that a minister, undistinguished by great brilliancy of genius or parliamentary eloquence, acquired so much weight, or conciliated so much favor, by the mere force of personal character: he possessed indeed a sound and cautious judgment, with a mind well adapted to business, and stored with that political knowledge which is requisite for a statesman; but it was in his unquestionable integrity, his open and manly conduct, his honest and prudent resolves, that the country chiefly trusted; for he was never suspected of governing merely to serve party purposes, of speaking for the pleasure of victory, or of intriguing for the acquisition of power. One trait in his character deserves peculiar notice: in his distribution of ecclesiastical patronage, and careful selection of those whom he raised to offices of dignity and responsibility in the church, he put to shame all his predecessors, and set a splendid example to future ministers; showing, what few seem ever to have suspected, that more influence is to be gained by one single appointment made from pure, disinterested motives, than by fifty pieces of preferment lavished on parliamentary retainers, or those whose only claims are the ties of kindred and affinity.

Domestic
events.

The judicial annals of this year were marked by a case so unparalleled in atrocity, that the criminal has obtained an unusual, though unenviable distinction, of introducing a new verb into our vocabulary. An Irishman, of the name of Burke, cohabiting with a

female, named Helen M'Dougal, coalesced with one Hare, who let lodgings for low travellers in the city of Edinburgh, to murder persons by wholesale, and dispose of their bodies to the teachers of anatomy. In that den of iniquity, according to the confession of the principal actor, sixteen persons, some in their sleep, others after intoxication, and several in a state of infirmity from disease, were suffocated by these demons in the human shape; one of the men generally throwing himself on the victim to hold him down, while the other, 'burked' him, by forcibly compressing the nostrils and mouth, or the throat, with his hands. Hare being admitted as king's evidence, Burke and his other partner in guilt were arraigned on three counts; charging them with the murder of an unfortunate girl of the town, named Patterson; of a poor idiot, known by the appellation of daft Jamie; and of an elderly woman, named Docherty; on the last of which Burke was found guilty; while the woman, Helen M'Dougal, was acquitted. The murderer was convicted on the twenty-fourth of December; but as the law of Scotland humanely allowed a longer space of time to elapse between conviction and execution than that of England, he did not suffer till the twenty-eighth of January ensuing: nevertheless, popular indignation did not abate; and when the monster was brought out to undergo his sentence, the shouts and execrations of the crowd which surrounded the gallows, and filled the neighboring streets, were quite appalling.

On the first of October this year, the London University was opened by the celebrated Charles Bell, professor of physiology and surgery, who delivered the first lecture of the courses dedicated to medical science; and on the twenty-fifth of the same month, a circumstance of great interest to the mercantile world took place in the opening of St. Katharine's Docks, below the Tower, with much pomp, and a large assemblage of spectators: the vessels which entered those spacious receptacles, amid the discharges of artillery and the shouts of assembled multitudes,

CHAP.
LXV.—
1828.

had their yards manned, and their rigging ornamented with the flags of all European nations, as well as other devices. The amount of capital, raised by shares, for this great undertaking, was £1,352,800; but the whole expense to its final completion was calculated at about £1,700,000: in clearing the ground, 1250 houses or tenements were pulled down; no less than 11,300 inhabitants having to seek accommodation elsewhere. The area thus obtained is about twenty-four acres; of which eleven and a half are devoted to wet docks: the canal leading to them from the river is 190 feet long, and forty-five broad; sunk to such a depth, that ships of 700 tons burden may enter at any time of the tide: the first stone was laid on the third of May, 1827; and more than 2500 men were daily employed.

Foreign
policy.

The only foreign politics that require additional comment are those of France and Greece. The ministry of M. de Villèle had fallen last year, because its members lent themselves to the designs of the court and priesthood, instead of consulting the growing spirit and intelligence of the nation; nor could several good measures which they had carried, or the royal favor, on account of which they had attempted and executed many bad, support them against a general impression, that neither civil nor religious liberty was safe in their hands. At the head of the new ministers forced on the court by the liberal party, was M. Roy, a gentleman possessing considerable knowledge of finance; but the cabinet was composed of men, moderate both in talent and opinions; and was tolerated by the king only as a necessary evil, though it contained much more of the materials of the old ministry than was agreeable to the party which raised it to power. The priests and jesuits were now striving in France for the absolute control of public education, as the most effectual means of recovering their power; while a seasonable jealousy of these attempts, and an ardent determination to resist them, was widely diffused; so that 'no jesuitism' became as awakening a cry in France, as 'no popery' used to be

in Great Britain: the new ministers, therefore, in their first acts, endeavored to allay the fears of the nation on these points; and in so doing, alienated from themselves still more the good will of the monarch. In his majesty's speech to the chambers, he took a different view from our cabinet of the transaction at Navarino; and after observing that the exertions of Ferdinand in Spain, to stifle the germs of civil discord, promised soon to restore the French army of occupation to its native land, he declared, that the rigorous blockade of Algiers, instituted on account of the insults and aggression of that state against French commerce, should not terminate until complete satisfaction was obtained.

In the autumn of this year, the French government sent a strong military force to the Morea, under general Maison; who, while the oppressor and the insidious patron of Greece were engaged in mortal conflict, expelled the cruel Ibrahim from a country which he had desolated, and reduced the Turkish fortresses of the Morea, which were obstinately defended by their garrisons: before the end of November, the ancient Peloponnesus, freed from foreign control, was left to the direction of its provisional government; at the head of which the count Capo d'Istria had been installed as president. In his inaugural address, he told his countrymen that its first care should be to repress insubordination, deliver them from anarchy, and conduct them by degrees to national and political regeneration: he also set himself sternly against the piratical habits by which independent Greece had disgraced herself; and he had sufficient authority to make the fleet, which was placed at his disposal, carry his orders into effect: as yet, neither he nor the government had enjoyed leisure to frame any system of finance; but he had obtained a loan from Russia, and looked forward confidently to the assistance of England and France. Under present circumstances, however, the most important subject was that relating to the boundaries of the new kingdom; and although this was a question which the allied powers, parties to the treaty of London,

CHAP.
LXV.

1828.

would have to settle with the Ottoman Porte, the commission of the national assembly addressed a declaration to those powers; in which it was proposed, that the northern mountains of Thessaly, and the course of the river Voiussa, should form its boundary on the north, to the exclusion of Macedonia: these limits, as they justly observed, seemed to be pointed out by nature herself; and where boundaries do not coincide with some great natural features, but are lines arbitrarily laid down, they actually tempt an usurper by that dangerous facility which they offer to violation: these considerations, however, were ultimately lost sight of. If any result was desirable for western Europe from the independence of Greece, it was the creation of a strong barrier against the encroachments of the northern leviathan, after the partition of Poland; and if Russian influence over the new state was feared, that influence would be more easily exerted over a small than over a large territory; which latter might easily preserve its liberty with the aid of external alliances: but the spirit of our tory government seemed adverse to the independence of any nation, except its own; and though there were considerations that especially recommended the interests of Greece to so admirable a scholar as our secretary for foreign affairs, no sentiment appeared able to conquer his rooted antipathy to the general cause of freedom.

CHAPTER LXVI.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1829.

Agitations in Ireland—Election of Mr. O'Connell for Clare—Difficulties of the cabinet—Determination of the government to concede the catholic claims—Opening of parliament—Suppression of the catholic association—Rejection of Mr. Peel at Oxford—Debates and passing of the emancipation bill—Disfranchisement of the Irish forty-shilling freeholders—Financial statements—Motion for parliamentary reform—Prorogation of parliament—Affairs of the continent—Agricultural and commercial distress—State of affairs in Ireland—Conflagration of York Minster—Opening of new Fleet Market and Post Office—New police—Meeting of parliament in 1830—Distress of the nation denied by ministers—Speeches, &c., on occasion of the address—Motions for inquiry, &c.—Debates on reductions and taxation, &c.—Committee on East Indian company's charter—Debate on the currency—The budget—Beer bill—Reform of parliament—Debates on subjects connected with it—Bill for amending the law on libel—Alterations in courts of justice—Illness of the king—Bill to authorise a stamp for the sign manual—Death of George IV.

IN Ireland the recommendation of the late lord-lieutenant was strictly followed; and when his successor, the duke of Northumberland, arrived in Dublin, he found agitation pervading the whole country: Brunswick clubs, despairing of any effectual aid from government, were beginning to buckle on their armor, and take the field against the new order of liberators; while the denunciations of both parties, breathing defiance and revenge, augured nothing less than the horrors of civil war. The situation of the prime minister now became one of great and peculiar difficulty: the whole tenor of his political life, as well as that of his principal supporters, had been marked by

Agitations
in Ireland.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

hostility to the catholic claims; every individual having distinctly pledged himself to resist them; grounding his declarations, not on circumstances which might change, but on the nature of the Romish church, which abhors the very notion of change: if the duke therefore saw reason to alter his own opinions, he would naturally find much difficulty in producing a similar change in those of honorable, disinterested, independent members of the legislature; nor would he find the sovereign more tractable; since his reluctance to yield on this point was deep-rooted and vehement: it is well known, that to obtain his majesty's consent, cost the premier months of management, vigilance, and perseverance; and probably nothing but that indolence and love of ease, which a dissolution of the ministry would have interrupted, overcame the repugnance he had ever manifested to entertain this question: in the mean time, O'Connell's election for Clare, the disturbances which afflicted Ireland, the efforts of a large party in England, and the delay of public business, which a continual agitation of this subject in parliament occasioned, made it necessary for his grace to decide on some mode of action. His choice was threefold; either to fall back on old tory principles, and take his ground, as at Waterloo, with a determination never to yield—or to grant emancipation with a free and liberal hand—or, lastly, to retire from the helm of state for a season, and permit a whig government to carry the measure. It may be truly alleged, that to put off concession much longer, without drawing the sword, and re-conquering Ireland, was impossible; and even how such a conquest could be obtained against an increasing majority in the house of commons, with more than a third of the nation favorable to emancipation, and another third tired of the subject, or insensible to its result, is very difficult to conceive: there can be little doubt, however, that the latter course would have been at once the wisest and most honorable; for it was hardly fair to steal the crown of victory from those statesmen, who, during the whole of their political career, had ably and eloquently advo-

cated the catholic cause; nor was it prudent in his grace to subject his own party not only to imputations and aspersions, but ultimately to disunion, by the course which he pursued.

CHAP.
LXVI.
1829.

Having determined, however, to carry the question by his own might, he first gave intimation of this intention in the king's speech, delivered by commission on the fifth of February: the suppression of the catholic association was there alluded to as a measure which ought to precede any review of the condition of Ireland, or any consideration of the disabilities under which Roman catholics were laboring. The advocates of exclusion, perceiving at once the tendency of this recommendation, complained of treacherous desertion and surprise, charging the duke with a perfidious concealment of his designs up to the last moment; while they loaded Mr. Peel and Mr. Goulburn, men distinguished as Irish secretaries by their anti-catholic sentiments, with the most bitter execrations, on account of their supposed apostacy. On the tenth, a bill was introduced by the former of these gentlemen, to augment the powers of government, for the purpose of suppressing the association; and this passed without opposition; for although its provisions were somewhat arbitrary in their nature, the friends of the Romanists voted in favor of it, as part of a measure intended to terminate in emancipation: the association, however, rendered all such enactments unnecessary, by announcing its own dissolution before the bill was complete. On the fifth of March, for which day a call of the house of commons had been ordered, Mr. Peel moved that they should go into committee respecting the laws which imposed disabilities on the Roman catholics; but he no longer rose as member for the university of Oxford: that station, from which Mr. Canning had been rejected, Mr. Peel had reached and retained by his uncompromising hostility to the catholic claims: actuated therefore by the most honorable feelings, he resigned his trust into the hands of those from whom he had received it, before he advocated a measure which they conscientiously abhorred: the only

CHAP.
LXVI.
1829.

matter of surprise is, that he should have incurred the mortification of certain defeat, by consenting to be put in nomination, with a view to re-election, by a small party of his adherents.

Introduc-
tion of
catholic
relief bill
by minis-
ters.

Mr. Peel began by stating, that he rose, as one of the king's ministers, to vindicate the advice which a united cabinet had given to his majesty, and submit to the house measures for carrying such recommendation into effect: he was aware of the difficulties with which the subject was surrounded, increased as they were by the relation in which he himself stood to the question; but having come to the sincere conviction, that the time had arrived, when an amicable adjustment of the disputed claims would be accompanied with less danger than any other course that could be suggested, he was prepared to act on that conviction; unchanged by any expression of contrary sentiments, however general or deep; unchanged by the forfeiture of political confidence, or by the heavy loss of private friendship. He had long felt, that with a house of commons favorable to catholic emancipation, his position, as a minister opposed to it, was untenable; and he had more than once intimated his desire to resign office, and thus remove one obstacle to a settlement of the question: he had done so on the present occasion; though at the same time he notified to the duke of Wellington, that, seeing how the current of public opinion lay, he was ready to sacrifice consistency or private friendship, and to support the measure, provided it were undertaken on principles from which no danger to the protestant establishment need be apprehended: he was aware that he was expected to make out a case for this change of policy; and he was now about to submit to the house a statement, which proved to his own mind, with the force of demonstration, that ministers were imperatively called on to recommend the measure, however inconsistent it might appear with their former tenets.

The argument, by which this case was to be made out, said Mr. Peel, resolved itself into the following propositions: first, matters could not remain in their

present state; the evil of divided councils being so great, that something must be done, and a government must be formed with a common opinion on the subject: secondly, a united government once constituted must do one of two things; it must either grant farther political rights to the catholics, or recall those which they already possess: but thirdly, to deprive them of what they already have, would be impossible; or, at least, would be infinitely more mischievous than to grant them more; and therefore no case remained to be adopted, except that of concession.

CHAP.
LXVI.
1829.

Having illustrated these propositions at great length, and with great ability, Mr. Peel proceeded to develop the course which it was intended to pursue. The principle or basis of the projected measures was the abolition of civil distinctions, and the establishment of equal political rights; with a few special exceptions: the chief of these were the continued disqualification of Roman catholics from holding the offices of lord chancellor, or keeper of the great seal, or lord lieutenant of Ireland; from receiving any appointments in protestant universities or colleges; and from exercising any right of presentation, as lay patrons, to the benefices and dignities of the church of England: an oath also was to be exacted from all who should become members of parliament, civil officers of state, or members of corporations, by which they were to promise allegiance to the crown, as well as to abjure every design of subverting the protestant establishment in church and state. To these indispensable provisions some others less important were added; such as prohibitions against carrying the insignia of office to places of Roman catholic worship; and against the assumption, by prelates of that communion, of the same episcopal titles as those which belong to the church of England: also certain precautions against the increase of monastic institutions, particularly that of the jesuits, intended chiefly to allay the alarm still existing in some minds against that once formidable order: a more effective and important check, however, on the consequences which might result from ad-

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

mitting Roman catholics in Ireland to civil power, was meditated in a law for raising the qualification of the elective franchise, in counties, from forty shillings to ten pounds; by which means, that privilege would be limited to persons really possessed of property, and less liable to be misled by the priests.

The motion was not very powerfully opposed; the principal speakers against it being sir Robert Inglis and Mr. Estcourt, the two members for Oxford university; the former of whom had been Mr. Peel's successful competitor for its representation. The chief argument used, was an assumption, that the grant of equal privileges to Roman catholics would be the destruction of our protestant establishment. With regard to Ireland, it was said, that discord and agitation were not new features in the condition of that country; that they were not a result of the penal laws; nor would they cease on the removal of civil disabilities. With respect to the divided state of the cabinet, it was asked, why did not the duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, instead of changing their own line of policy, rather attempt to bring over their colleagues to their views;—especially as the right honorable gentleman confessed that he still thought there was danger in granting catholic emancipation? Against the fear of civil war, it was said, that reliance ought to have been placed on public opinion and the moral determination of the British people: at best too, the evil day would only be postponed, and resistance to ulterior struggles rendered more difficult. Ministers were also met with taunts on the intimidated spirit from which concession was wrung, and which was rendered evident in their ridiculous provisions, called securities. If Mr. Peel, it was said, and other newly made converts thought they could no longer resist, because they had not a majority in the house of commons, why did they refuse to accept a majority? why had not parliament been dissolved? such a course was right at any time, when a measure strongly affecting the constitution was contemplated; but it was peculiarly necessary in the present instance. The marquis of Blandford even

maintained, that if the house sanctioned the present audacious invasion of our constitution, it would break the trust reposed in it by the people of England, who were surprised with the unexpected announcement now made by ministers; constituted as the house was, it did not express that just alarm which was felt by the people for the safety of protestant institutions.

The motion, on the other hand, was supported by sir G. Murray, colonial secretary, Mr. C. Grant, Mr. North, and Mr. Huskisson; while the opposition members who spoke, contented themselves with general observations of approbation and congratulation. The positions were repeated and enforced, that the pacification of Ireland was necessary to the safety of the empire; and that without emancipation pacification could not be effected; since all classes had identified themselves with this question, and Ireland had thence fallen into a state in which it could not possibly remain: it must now either advance or recede; for every tie which held society together in that island had been loosened or broken: a certain state of things, indeed, not deserving the name of society, might be maintained by means of the sword; but such an one as would have no analogy to the British constitution. The only intimidation, to which ministers could be accused of yielding, was the fear of continuing such a state of affairs, and aggravating all its evils by gradual accumulation, instead of restoring mutual good will and the peaceful empire of the law: no other intimidation existed; none was felt in Ireland; for what was the force of an unarmed multitude, when measured against that of the state? But when it was considered, what effects might arise from disunion—since a spirit of resentment was growing up, which excited men against each other,—there appeared a prospect of intimidation, such as did not admit of contempt; for no army could avail to put down a system of private outrage and revenge: the protestant body, at least the body which arrogated to itself that title, knew the state of enthrallment under which they had held the catholics; and that an unarmed multitude must sub-

CHAP.
LXVI.
—
1829.

mit: but were we to destroy one part of the people by rousing and inflaming the other? It was rather the duty of government to protect the whole, to ensure for them the greatest degree of protection, and to give them all the privileges which they had a right to enjoy.

Regarding a dissolution of parliament, it was said, that the present house was as capable of discussing this question, as any which had sat for the last twenty-five years: it was in fact a question fit for consideration at all times, when brought forward by any member; and was particularly so, when it came with a recommendation from the throne, as necessary for the peace and safety of the united kingdom. A dissolution of parliament, Mr. Peel observed, must leave the catholic association and the elective franchise in Ireland just as they were; for the common law was inadequate to suppress them: then, whatever might be the majority returned for Great Britain, Ireland would return eighty or ninety members in the interest of the association, forming a compact and united band, against the force of which it would be impossible to carry on the local government of the country. It had been said, indeed, increase the army, or the constabulary force; but a greater force could not be employed there. He would state one simple fact: above five-sixths of the infantry had been engaged in aiding the government of Ireland; not so much by repressing violence, as by interposing between two hostile parties: under such circumstances, a re-action must ensue, which would gradually lead to this alternative; namely, to a plan of narrowing the civil government, and resting it on the apex, instead of its proper position on the base. It was also denied that there was any thing so peculiar, in the nature of the proposed measure, as to require a special appeal to the people; since it was incorrectly called a violation of the constitution: that constitution was not to be sought for solely in the acts of 1688: its foundations had been laid much earlier—laid by catholic hands, and cemented by catholic blood: but even taking the compact of 1688 to be the foundation of our rights and liberties, the most diligent opponent

of the catholic claims would be unable to point out in the bill of rights a single clause, by which the exclusion of Roman catholics from seats in parliament was declared to be a fundamental or indispensable principle of the British constitution: that bill merely regarded the liberties guaranteed to the people, and the protection of the throne from the intrusion of popery. To the objection, that the measure contemplated was an unconditional concession, without adequate security for the protestant establishment, it was answered,—that principles of exclusion were not the kind of securities to which the established religion trusted, or ought to trust: the real securities of protestantism would remain, unaffected by this bill in the unalterable attachment of the people; who, though divided on minor subjects, would unite in resisting the errors of popery: the combined force of habits and circumstances was not so easily to be shaken: the house also, it was said, should look at that great security which it would derive from the generous gratitude of the Irish. Neither were the actual securities devised so nugatory as they had been represented: Mr. Peel said, that when he looked at the petitions sent from all parts of the country, he could not help being struck with one extraordinary coincidence;—these petitions united in praying for three special securities—the extinction of the catholic association, the correction of the elective franchise in Ireland, and the abolition of the order of jesuits: now the bill which he proposed happened to contain all these securities; and if the necessity of obtaining them were so great as the petitioners contended, let him be answered this question:—would the protestants ever have had the least chance of procuring them, unless his majesty had recommended the disabilities of the Roman catholics to be taken into consideration, with a view to adjustment?

On a division, the motion was carried by a majority of 348 votes against 160; which preponderance not only made manifest the fate of the question in the commons, but indicated an overwhelming weight of ministerial influence, to be exerted, probably with no

CHAP.
LXVI.
1829.

less success, in the house of peers: resolutions, proposed by Mr. Peel in the committee, were immediately agreed to; and a bill founded on them was introduced, and read for the first time, on the tenth of March.

On the seventeenth, the honorable secretary moved the second reading of this bill; when he was strongly attacked on the desertion of his principles by sir Edward Knatchbull, one of the members for Kent. Mr. Goulburn admitted that he had adopted new opinions on this subject, because nothing else could possibly be done in the present state of Ireland; and contended, that the measure proposed was calculated to give more complete ascendancy to the protestant establishment, by diminishing the irritation, and removing the prejudices of its opponents: this method however of giving permanent security to the protestant establishment, by granting political power to the church of Rome, was strongly condemned by Mr. G. Bankes, who declared that it was but a stepping-stone for the catholics to reach every thing they might desire. Lord Palmerston and sir George Murray supported the measure with much eloquence and animation; but the speech which on this occasion claimed and deserved the greatest attention from the house, was that of Mr. Sadler, a man of distinguished abilities, rare honesty, and benevolent disposition, who had lately been returned to parliament for the borough of Newark, by the duke of Newcastle's interest. Mr. Sadler not only argued at great length against the principle of the bill, and its dangerous tendency toward the protestant church; but showed its utter futility in remedying the evils which oppressed Ireland, or repaying the wrongs which she had suffered from so many generations. 'Ireland,' said he, 'degraded, deserted, oppressed, and pillaged, is turbulent; and you listen to the selfish recommendations of her agitators: you seek not to know, or, knowing, you wilfully neglect, her real distresses: if you can calm the agitated surface of society, you heed not that fathomless depth of misery, sorrow, and distress, the troubled waves of which may still heave unseen and disre-

garded; and this, forsooth, is patriotism! Ireland asks of you bread, and you offer to her catholic emancipation; and this, I presume, is construed to be the taking into consideration, as his majesty recommended, the whole state of Ireland.' Mr. Sadler made an eloquent apostrophe to the memory of Mr. Canning, declaring his own repentance in having aided the too successful attempts to hunt down that illustrious victim;—a man, whom England and the world recognised as an ornament; whose eloquence was, in these days at least, unrivalled; while the energies of his capacious mind, stored with knowledge and elevated by genius, were devoted to the service of his country. 'This,' said the honorable member, 'was the statesman, with whom the present ministers could not act, for a reason which vitiates their present resolutions, and furnishes the most disgraceful page in the annals of our country: but peace to his memory! my humble tribute is paid when it can be no longer heard or regarded; when it is drowned by the voice of interested adulation, now poured into the ears of the living. He fell; but his character is rescued: it rises and triumphs over that of his surviving,—what shall I call them? Let their own consciences supply the hiatus.'

Mr. R. Grant maintained, that it was in vain to speak of applying to the evils of Ireland such cures as it was supposed might be found in the establishment of poor-laws, or the compulsory residence of absentees: even if the expediency of these measures were assumed, this was not the proper time for their application: the question at present was, how existing discontent might be allayed—how the raging pestilence might be stopped. It was only after this had been done, that preventives could be rationally suggested; for although the evils of Ireland had been traced to many causes, these causes themselves, even where they existed, were but the effects of political distinctions, founded on the difference of religious creeds: the house had been told, for instance, to seek for the source of such evils in the local oppression practised

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

in Ireland, rather than in the general restrictive laws: of local oppression, no doubt, plenty had always existed; but it had ever flourished, while the followers of one creed were armed with power to oppress the adherents of another deprived of all power. The same mischiefs too, it was said, had existed before the reformation, when there was but one religious faith in Ireland: true; and they existed, because even then the same system of excluding the natives from political power had been long followed, though on different grounds. Of all declaimers against the bill, no one was so furious as sir Charles Wetherell, who had refused to draw it up in his official capacity as attorney-general: still in office, under a minister who was understood to have made implicit submission to his word of command the tenure by which office was to be held, and knowing that nothing but the difficulty of supplying his place prevented his discharge,¹ he furiously hurled on the measure, its framers, and its advocates, fragments of the most frantic declamation and personal hostility. Such vituperation called up Mr. Peel; who, after complaining of this outrageous conduct, reverted to the grounds on which he had first proposed the bill; again urging the state of Ireland, and the absolute necessity of doing something; the inability of his opponents to do any thing better, though they vehemently opposed the measure now offered; the impossibility of any government standing, which should set itself, on avowed principles, against concession; and the folly of treating the question as one which had any connexion with religion: the catholics were never excluded, at any time, on account of their religious creed, but for a supposed deficiency of civil worth; and the religious test was applied, not to detect the worship of saints, or any other tenet of their faith, but merely to discover whether they were Roman catholics; to discover, not

¹ In the event of the attorney-general's office becoming vacant, ministers could not pass over sir Nicholas Tindal, the solicitor-general, while his elevation would have occasioned a vacancy in the representation of the university of Cambridge; and after the defeat of Mr. Peel at Oxford, they did not wish to run the risk of another.

the religionist, but the bad and intriguing subject: he complained grievously, that an unfair application had been made of his unhappy phrase, that the proposed measure was 'a breaking in upon the constitution of 1688;' by which he meant no more, than that there would be an alteration in the words of the bill of rights; and if this were to break in upon the constitution, then had such 'breaking in' frequently taken place. After feelingly lamenting the loss of private friendship and of public confidence, which he had sustained by proposing these measures, the honorable secretary expressed his conviction, that the time would come, though he might not live to see it, when full justice would be done by men of all parties to the motives which had actuated him; when this question would be fully settled, and others would see that he had no other alternative than to act as he had acted. The result of the division was 353 for the second reading of the bill, and 180 against it: during its progress through the committee, several strong amendments were proposed, but all were rejected; and on the thirtieth of March it was read a third time, and passed.

Next day, Mr. Peel, with an unusually large escort of members, presented the bill at the bar of the lords, where it was read for the first time, on the same evening, without opposition. Here its opponents cherished some hopes that its progress might be ultimately arrested: but they were destined to be disappointed; for a great number of peers, who had hitherto opposed the measure, were now either satisfied that the moment had arrived, when the claims of the Roman catholics could no longer be resisted with safety, or were at least prepared to sacrifice their opinions to ministerial dictation. The second reading was moved by the duke of Wellington, on the second of April, in a speech replete with nervous eloquence and comprehensive reasoning: nor did the character of his grace ever shine with greater lustre, than when he gave utterance to that solemn, pathetic, and beautiful declaration, which had so striking an effect on

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

the present occasion. 'It has been my fortune,' he said, 'to have seen much of war,—more than most men; I have been constantly engaged in active duties of the military profession from boyhood until I am grown grey; my life has been passed in familiarity with scenes of death and human suffering; circumstances have placed me in countries where the war was internal, between opposite parties of the same nation: and rather than a country I loved should be visited with the calamities which I have seen, with the unutterable horrors of a civil war,—I would run any risk; I would make any sacrifice; I would freely lay down my life.'

The archbishop of Canterbury, dreading the ulterior designs of the papists more than any consequences which might result from a refusal of their claims, moved an amendment, that the bill should be read a second time that day six months: the debate was continued by adjournment through four successive nights: the spiritual lords who spoke, beside the mover of the amendment, were the archbishops of York and Armagh, the bishops of London, Salisbury, Durham and Oxford; all of whom opposed the bill, except the last, whose position was peculiarly painful; for whether it was, that he had been convinced by the arguments of his friend and pupil, Mr. Peel, or that a sense of gratitude induced him to lend aid to his ministerial patrons,—he had to refute his own powerful speech, made in the preceding session; and this change of sides, but more especially the defence of his altered sentiments, subjected him to the bitterest reproaches of party spirit. Among temporal peers, the principal defenders of this bill were the lord chancellor, the marquis of Lansdowne, viscount Goderich, the earl of Westmoreland, and lord Plunkett: but no one had a more difficult task to perform than lord chancellor Lyndhurst; for up to this time he had been distinguished by his learned, earnest, and eloquent refutations of all plans for concession; which plans were now repeated, and which refutations he also was called on to confute: even so late as last year, he had

declared his conviction, that emancipation, though accompanied by weighty securities, was pregnant with danger to our constitution and establishment; and he now declared his equally conscientious conviction, that emancipation, without any securities at all, would be conducive to the safety and prosperity of that same constitution and establishment. The marquis of Anglesea, who, three months before, had been recalled from his government of Ireland because he held out hopes of concession to its catholic population, now entered the ministerial phalanx which combated for that measure; insisting principally on the military points of view in which the question ought to be placed. 'Every man,' he said, 'acquainted with the state of Ireland, would agree with him, that in a time of profound peace, under our exclusive laws, 25,000 men was but a scanty garrison for that country; but in the event of war, or even the rumor of war, that would be an improvident government which did not immediately add to it a force of 15,000 men: 40,000 indeed would scarcely be sufficient under such circumstances. It could not be questioned, that both France and America wished to do us injury; and in case of collision with either of those powers, the first object of both would be to place arms in the hands of the discontented Irish: he argued on the supposition that the exclusive laws were in existence; for if not, those arms would not be received; or if received, would be turned against the donors. Suppose, however, that we were actually at war, having the European powers combined against us—a contingency by no means unlikely; it would then be madness in any administration not to throw at least 70,000 men into Ireland: but let this bill pass; and then, if war should be declared, we should be able within six weeks to raise in that country 50,000 able-bodied and willing-hearted men, who would find their way to any quarter of the globe, whither we might choose to direct them.'

The duke of Richmond, the earls of Winchelsea, Harewood, Mansfield, Falmouth, and Enniskillen all strongly opposed the bill; while the chief justice, lord

CHAP.
LXVI.
1829.

Tenterden, declared against it, as a violation of our constitution; and as threatening ruin to our protestant church, which he valued, not only for the purity of its doctrines, but because, of all churches that ever existed, it was most favorable to civil and religious liberty: neither did he see any countervailing benefit likely to be gained by so fatal a sacrifice. After ably commenting on the various acts made to exclude papists from parliament, as well as from various offices of the state, his lordship declared his opinion, that the anticipated tranquillity of Ireland, as a result of this bill, would never be realised. Earl Grey spoke at great length; repeating the argument, that an exclusion of catholics had not originally formed any part of our protestant government, since they had been found in parliament from the reign of Elizabeth down to that of Charles II.; that the exclusion, when it did come, was adopted to guard against political dangers of a temporary nature, which had long since disappeared; that it formed no essential part of the revolution settlement, or of the bill of rights; also that the coronation oath was never intended to restrain the king from consenting to such alterations as parliament in its wisdom might enact: he also entered at great length into that important part of the question, which related to its bearing on the act of union with Scotland. As to the effect of this bill on the state of Ireland, he would not venture to say that it would at once bestow tranquillity, and remove all dangers; but he was sure that, without such a measure, it was impossible to have tranquillity, or to be free from peril: by the exclusive system they had produced more than one rebellion in Ireland, to be extinguished in blood;—but had tranquillity ensued? By no means: on the contrary, the condition of that country had been growing worse and worse every year, requiring a large military establishment to keep the people obedient to the laws, even in a state of peace. Was this the mode, he asked, of making Ireland a useful portion of the empire? Was this the way we should be preparing for war? But it was urged—if you pass this bill,

catholic ascendancy is virtually established on the ruins of the protestant church: that church unfortunately was placed in a situation which could not be freed from difficulties of one sort or another; the great obstacle to its triumph had always been, that it had never been the church of more than a small minority of the Irish people; and that it had been so, was, in his opinion, a consequence of those very laws which they now sought to repeal: take them away, and the number of its disciples would immediately increase; not from the spirit of conversion, for any open attempt in that way would be most inpolitic, but from its superior reason, and its more wholesome tenets; which would come more fairly into play, as soon as it should be relieved from that invidious situation in which it now stood: take away the false protection of exclusive laws, and superior excellence would prevail in the conflict of argument.

Lord Eldon, obeying a general call made on him by the house, spoke at great length, and with evident sincerity, on this important question; stating his belief, that ministers, who had introduced the bill, were actuated by a sense of duty to their country; though he lamented their conduct: neither could he acquit the duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel of wilfully deceiving the people, and bringing them into a state of apathy, by leading them into a persuasion that no measure of the kind would be brought forward, at least this session. With regard to the latter gentleman, his lordship feelingly observed;—‘I mention him without the slightest degree of irritation; and if there be any unfavorable impression on his mind toward me, from thinking, that the old maxim, *idem velle atque idem nolle*, is the foundation of all true friendship both in public and private life; I solemnly declare, that I suffered the most excruciating pang I ever endured, when I found that I differed on this question from one, whose concurrence in my opinions for the last fifteen years I found the most effective support.’ On lord Lyndhurst, however, the ex-chancellor was more severe; for that noble person had endeavored to ex-

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

cuse his own inconsistency by fixing on lord Eldon a charge of similar frailty. With regard to the measure itself, he did not rest any part of his opposition to it on the terms of the coronation oath; neither would he contend that to alter any of the laws passed at the revolution was beyond the power of parliament: this, however, looking at the thirteenth, twenty-fifth, and thirtieth of Charles II. he maintained,—that the exclusion from parliament, produced by the last of those statutes, was in conformity with the true construction of the acts of 1688, and with the act of union between England and Scotland in the reign of Anne: these, he said, were meant to be the governing principles of our glorious constitution of 1688, until a strong necessity for altering it should be made apparent. His lordship went on to show the futility of the securities demanded, and of the measure itself, as it regarded the tranquillisation of Ireland; being followed by lord Plunkett, who said, that he had reserved himself, for the purpose of hearing the unanswerable arguments against the bill, which lord Eldon, on former occasions, had threatened to produce, whenever this measure came fairly before the house: as that noble lord, however, had brought forth nothing but the *ipse dixit* of his own authority, unsustained either by ingenious argument, by historical deduction, or by appeal to public and authenticated documents, he felt himself so far absolved from the necessity of refuting anticipated arguments, that he would apply his observations more particularly to the position—that this bill was calculated to subvert our protestant constitution: after the noble and learned lord had dilated at great length on this topic, the duke of Wellington closed the debate by a general reply to the principal objections made against the measure. The apprehended danger to the Irish church, from the admission of a few Roman catholics into parliament, he treated as absurd, considering that the throne would be filled by a protestant: besides, a fundamental article of the union between the two countries was an union of the two churches; and it was impossible that any mischief could arise to

the Irish branch of this united church, without destroying the union of the kingdoms: he next adverted to the charge of inconsistency brought against himself and his colleagues; observing, that he well knew the sacrifice they would make in adopting this measure, and how much more of popularity they might gain by placing themselves at the head of the protestant league, with the cry of 'No popery!' but they felt, that in so doing, they would have left on the interests of their country a burden to bear all down; and that they would have deserved the hatred and execration of their fellow citizens. With regard to the secrecy of which he had been accused, his grace begged leave to say, that his noble and learned friend had done that to him, which he complained of others having done to himself; or, to use the words of a right honorable and mutual friend, 'he had thrown at him a large paving-stone, instead of a small pebble:' in this he had not acted fairly, since he knew how the cabinet was constructed with regard to this question; and could he declare, that the prime minister had a right to say a single word to any person whatever on the measure, until the person most interested of all in the kingdom, had consented to his speaking out? Before his lordship accused him of improper secrecy, he ought to have known the precise day on which he was permitted to open his mouth: with regard to what had been observed respecting a dissolution of parliament, he declared his opinion, that noble lords were mistaken in their notion of the advantages anticipated from such a measure; and were not aware of the consequences and inconveniences of a dissolution at that particular time. 'But,' said his grace, 'when I knew the state of the elective franchise in Ireland—when I recollected the number of men it took to watch one election that took place there last summer—when I foresaw the consequences which a dissolution would produce on the returns to the house of commons, to say nothing of the risks at each election, and the collisions that might have led to something like a civil war—knowing, I say, all these things, I should have been wanting in

CHAP.

LXVI.

— 1829. —

Passing of
catholic
relief bill.

duty to my sovereign and to my country, had I advised his majesty to dissolve his parliament. The second reading was determined by the votes of 217 peers against 112: on the seventh and eighth of April, the bill passed through a committee, in which many amendments were moved, but none carried: on the tenth, it was read a third time, after another debate, notwithstanding the persevering resistance of its opponents; especially of lord Eldon, who fought stoutly to the end; declaring ‘that he would sooner lay down his existence that very night, than awake to the reflection that he had consented to an act which would stamp him as a violator of his oath, a traitor to his church, and a traitor to our constitution:’ the third reading was carried by a majority of 213, against 109; three days afterwards, the bill received its final confirmation in the royal assent, very reluctantly extorted from a sovereign, who seems to have given it chiefly to relieve himself from a troublesome and annoying question.²

If any man had fondly imagined that the removal of disabilities from Roman catholics would prove an immediate or sufficient cure for the disorders of Ireland, he must either have been very ignorant of the state of that country, or have wilfully deceived himself: protestant ascendancy was too deeply and extensively rooted in all its institutions to admit of such a remedy; nor was it likely, that the Roman catholics, having acquired means to break their chain, would remain long without trying their efficiency. One fault was, that the measure itself had been gained by agitation, not granted generously as a boon: but no method of granting it would have completely satisfied the Irish; and all the benefit which ought to have been expected from it, was the allaying of heats, and the assuaging of animosities, until other measures could be introduced, which might have the effect of

² ‘The universal talk,’ says lord Eldon to his daughter, ‘is about the manner in which the king, at his levee, received the voters for the catholic question—very uncivilly; markedly so toward the lords spiritual who so voted—and the civility with which he received the anti-catholic voters, particularly the bishops.....consent to the bill he certainly did; but with a language of reluctance, pain and misery, which, if it had been represented, would have prevented a great deal of that rattling which carried the measure.’—*Life*, vol. iii. p. 88.

ameliorating the condition of the country, by establishing such security for life and property, that no person would be afraid to lay out his capital there, or to exert his industry: it is only in the bosom of national tranquillity that national prosperity and wealth can be produced.

Emancipation having been gained, Mr. Peel brought in a bill to disfranchise the Irish forty-shilling freeholders, and raise the qualification to ten pounds: this was part and parcel of the general measure, and it met with no serious opposition even in Ireland; for the association was extinct, the peasantry were tired of the privilege, and the landlords were not very anxious to retain those instruments of bribery and corruption, which had recoiled on themselves: the measure, however, was one of great importance; for it has preserved some balance in the Irish representation, by keeping a portion of it still in the hands of protestant landholders, and has accordingly been a favorite subject of reprobation among agitators of all degrees. The great leader of that class presented himself, on the fifteenth of May, to redeem his pledge, by offering to take his seat for Clare: on the success of this application he had staked his professional reputation, and he attempted to secure it by two pleas: the first resting only on a legal quibble, that the act of union, though it forbade a Roman catholic to sit in parliament, imposed no penalties on him for doing so; the second, more plausible, as founded on the enactments of the new statute; although this was expressly limited to 'such persons, professing the Roman catholic religion, as should, after its commencement, be returned members of the house of commons.' Both these pleas were overruled, after long debates, and an elaborate argument of Mr. O'Connell himself at the bar of the house: but if the provision, which excluded the great agitator from his seat, was designed, as report went, in a paltry spirit of hostility against the man, it had no other effect than that of sending him back to be re-elected by his constituents; and inflaming him with resentment against those, whom he viewed in the light

CHAP.
LXVI.
—
1829.

Disfranchisement
of forty-shilling
freeholders.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

State of
political
parties.

of persecutors: in place therefore of that gratitude with which all catholics were to receive emancipation, their champion now loaded ministers with the most opprobrious epithets, as men, who, having been false to their own party, could never be true to any other: in a similar spirit, he announced his ulterior design to effect a repeal of the union by that system of agitation, which had already proved so successful; and this purpose he deliberately followed up by the most inflammatory harangues, and various other methods of popular excitement.

Almost the whole interest of this session was absorbed in the one great question. During its discussion in parliament, it occasioned a duel between the duke of Wellington and the earl of Winchelsea; the latter of whom received his adversary's fire; but nobly declining to aim at such a life as that which he had within his power (for he was an extraordinary marksman), he discharged his own pistol in the air. After its final settlement, it produced very important consequences, by driving a large body of ultra tories, through pique, into the ranks of the reformers: these were unjustly indignant at the duke and his satellites for precipitating a measure, which could not have been long stayed; since the numerical majority of Irish catholics, inflamed against a dominant minority, was so great, that nothing less than a complete conquest of the country would have kept them in subjection: but how could that conquest have been effected, when a majority of the British house of commons was in favor of emancipation? As the commons of England hold the strings of the purse, how could the sinews of war have been supplied without their concurrence? It may be said perhaps, that resort should have been had to a dissolution of parliament: but it is certain, that this measure had lost its interest with a very large portion of the nation; while not a few were anxious to close at all hazards a question, which had long disturbed tranquillity, and become a serious obstacle to the transaction of public business: besides, the whigs were a powerful body;

and being, as they would have been, joined by the moderates and every other party, except that of the high church tories, they would inevitably have carried the elections in their favor; so that, as the duke of Wellington observed in his place, there would have been all the hazard of a collision approaching to a civil war, without any probability of a result favorable to the adversaries of emancipation.

CHAP.
LXVI.
1829.

On the eighth of May, the chancellor of the exchequer opened his budget with the gratifying intelligence, that the revenue of the preceding year had so far exceeded his estimate, as to have left a clear surplus of nearly £6,000,000 for the sinking fund: but for the present year, as the house was anxious to abolish the absurd system of defraying the expense of military and naval pensions, or the 'dead weight,' as it was called, by postponing its burdens, he estimated the gross revenue at £51,347,000, and the expenditure at £48,333,593; by which means he left only a clear sinking-fund of £3,000,000 for diminishing our public debt. After this financial statement, which produced but little discussion, the prorogation of parliament was preceded by no measure of importance, except an abortive motion for parliamentary reform: it was introduced by the marquis of Blandford, one of those members of the ultra tory faction, who, in disgust at the conduct of the present ministry and parliament, had been converted into reformers, quite as suddenly and inconsistently, as the men, of whose apostacy they complained, had become liberal and tolerant. 'After what had happened,' said his lordship, 'the country demanded some statutory provision, to secure its agriculture, its manufactures, and its trade; but more especially to secure protestant interests against the influx and increase of the Roman catholic party: one mode of securing this, and at the same time of purifying the representation, would be to abolish the borough-market, which had now been thrown open to catholics.'

Financial
statements.

The noble mover of this question was in a situation similar to that of the lamb in the fable, which called on the wolf, little knowing how near he was

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

to the fold: the motion was made rather in the nature of a notice, than with any design of having the topics which it embraced fully discussed at this late period of the session: it was, however, hailed and supported by some of the old reformers, though on very different grounds from that dislike of free trade, and apprehension of catholic influence, which animated the mover; while Mr. W. Smith, in voting for the resolutions, expressed great satisfaction that the relief bill had produced one effect which its best friends had not anticipated;—the transformation of many among the highest Tories of the land into something very like radical reformers. On the twelfth of this month Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst moved the second reading of a bill which he had brought in, for expediting business in the courts of equity, and which proposed that the crown should have power to nominate another equity judge; he took this occasion to mollify the resentment of his aged predecessor, by extolling highly his judicial labors, whilst he kept his failings in the background: a pardonable course towards an old statesman, who whatever those failings may have been, was at least free from all hypocrisy, and whose extraordinary power of intellect was only equalled by the integrity of his principles.³ This bill was read a third time on the twenty-first; but the session being far advanced, the subject was deferred to another year.

Changes in
the cabinet.

Parliament was prorogued by commission on the twenty-fourth of June; about which time, the legal arrangements, rendered necessary by the dismissal of Sir Charles Wetherell, were completed. Sir James Scarlett, who had filled the office of attorney-general under Mr. Canning, readily consented to cast aside his whig principles, and serve under the duke of Wellington; and that the impropriety of again passing

³ A subscription was opened this year among his friends and admirers to found the Eldon Law Scholarship at Oxford; which soon amounted to the sum of £7800: one of his admirers, Charles Francis, esq., founded also and endowed, at his own expense, 'the Eldon School' at Vauxhall, for 150 boys; 'to perpetuate his memory, and to commemorate his able, zealous, and constant defence of our protestant reformed religion against every innovation.'

over the head of the solicitor-general might be avoided, the latter was promoted to the first seat in the court of common pleas; chief-justice Best being removed into the house of peers, under the title of lord Wynford, and Mr. Sugden, an eminent chancery barrister, made solicitor-general: but the most important change was, the retirement of the duke of Clarence from his popular administration of the admiralty, and the return of viscount Melville as first lord; whose conduct in his former administration had been marked by numerous transgressions of the most serious character, especially on the coasts of Spain; and whose partiality to his countrymen was proverbial: he was succeeded at the board of control by lord Ellenborough, who had held the privy seal, which was now given to lord Rosslyn, lord Grey being objected to by the king.

CHAP.
LXVI.
1829.

The foreign affairs which require notice, as affecting Great Britain, were principally those in the East, where Turkey, now at the mercy of the Russian autocrat, was obliged to sue for peace. The terms granted were as follow:—the Pruth to constitute the European limit, as before; but Silistria to be dismantled: an alteration to be made in the Asiatic boundaries; so that the whole eastern coast of the Black Sea, from the Kuban to the harbor of St. Nicholas, together with the fortresses of Anapa and Poti, should remain in possession of Russia: the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia to be confirmed in their rights; but the Hospodars to be nominated only for life, and no Turks allowed to dwell there: free trade on the Black Sea, and navigation through the Straits for vessels belonging to Russia, as well as all other countries at peace with the Porte: the sultan to defray the expenses of the war; and, finally, to accede to the treaties concluded at London, regarding the Greeks. Thus, while Russia cautiously but secretly advanced nearer and nearer to the grand object of its ambitious sovereigns, Greece came to be admitted into the list of European states, and fresh prospects unfolded themselves for the East. On the twenty-second of March, a protocol

Review of
foreign
politics.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

had been signed for the purpose of fixing the undetermined limits of the new kingdom; but it was now agreed to circumscribe its territory within a much narrower space: instead of adopting any boundary marked out by nature,—even that which would have comprehended the gulf of Volo on the east, and Arta on the west; and which would have left the Grecian state, though still too small, yet compact and defensible,—it was now proposed to draw the line still farther to the south, commencing on the east at Zeitoun, near Thermopylæ, and running across the country in the direction of Vlachori, till it reached the river Aspropotamos, whose course it was to follow as far as the sea; thus excluding, not only Thessaly, but Acarnania also; and leaving the whole western frontier of northern Greece open to, or rather inviting the attacks of, its barbarian foes: and this determination was made without the wishes of the people being consulted, or any communication made to the Greek government. It seemed as if British statesmen were only anxious to leave a perpetual cause of strife, war, and bloodshed, which might afterwards turn to the account of Russia.

The session of the states general of the Netherlands, in the present year, was less tranquil and satisfactory than any that had been held since the restoration: though the king himself was not unpopular, his government had produced general dissatisfaction by some obnoxious measures; particularly by dismissing judges who were supposed to be too obstinate; by great partiality in its official appointments; and by exercising much severity against the press, when it happened to criticise the policy of administration. As soon as the states general met, the second chamber occupied itself in discussing an immense number of petitions recommending improvement in the existing system; but though some amelioration was made, government rejected the proposal, that cases of alleged abuse of the liberty of the press should be tried by a jury: it also successfully opposed itself to the introduction of grand juries, and the extension of jury trials to the provincial

courts and other criminal tribunals: on the other hand, a body in the chamber resisted and censured all its measures; and the session ended with more excitement than had been shown at its commencement. In France, the session closed, after much embarrassment; and a new ministry was formed, under the presidency of prince Polignac; all the members of which belonged to the extreme right, or that section which was known to the public as advocates of irresponsible power in politics, and of spiritual dominion in matters of religion. Nothing could exceed the unpopularity of these appointments; more especially that of M. Bourmont, who claimed the confidence of his monarch for having betrayed Napoleon at Waterloo; and of Labourdonnaye, who had signalled himself by recommending a frightful system of proscription, and had formally classified those descriptions of people on whom he demanded vengeance. Incessant prosecutions of the press, for having boldly denounced these ministers and their policy, tended only to increase the general indignation; and associations were formed to resist the payment of taxes, in case ministers should attempt to rule without a chamber: prosecutions then increased in number; divisions arose in the cabinet itself, and M. de Labourdonnaye retired: nevertheless, the expression of public opinion against the administration continued as strong and unanimous as ever.

In Portugal, the wretch Miguel began to show his true colors: after premature attempts at insurrection, in favor of Donna Maria, had failed in Oporto, the usurper made use of this occurrence to multiply arrests in the capital: every individual, whom any creature of government disliked, or any private enemy chose to denounce by an anonymous accusation, was instantly consigned to the horrid dungeons of the Limoeiro, or of St. Julian; while sentences of exile pronounced by a special commission on the conspirators of Oporto, were arbitrarily converted into capital punishment by the tyrant: in comparison, however, with death, the condition of the prisoners, with whom the jails and fortresses were crowded to suffocation, was scarcely to

CHAP.
LXVI.
1829.

be envied: though all were uncondemned, and most of them innocent, the whole were delivered over to the merciless authority of apostolic miscreants, who seemed to find no gratification so great as that of inventing new modes of misery. Among the incarcerated were many affluent persons, who charitably contributed to support the poorer prisoners, whom their tyrants were willing to leave in utter starvation: to deprive the latter of this alleviation of misery, government ordered the former to be removed from the dungeons of the city, and immured in the fortresses of St. Julian, Belem, and Bugio: without being brought to trial, every one was cut off from communication, by speech or writing, even with the members of his own family: many died by famine and suffocation; and suspicion was strong that in some instances poison had seconded the usurper's jealousy: no rank, sex, or character was respected: a child, five years old, was kept in solitary confinement five days, and subjected to all the tortures of a prison, in order to extort evidence against its father and mother; a refugee Spanish bishop, who had been a member of the Cortes of 1812, and had since lived in obscurity and peace at Lisbon, was thrust into the dungeons of St. Julian, where he died within four days, in consequence of the brutal treatment he received from Telles Jordao, a brutal wretch worthy of the worst times of the inquisition, to whom was entrusted the government of that fortress for the very purpose of torturing its inmates. All these acts of the usurper were encouraged by his execrable mother, who took advantage of a season, during which her son was confined by an accident, to infuse her own diabolical spirit into the police, removing a minister who had sufficed even for Miguel, and replacing him by a minion of her own. The same sanguinary scenes were acted at Oporto, where the rage of the tyrant was backed by the bigotry of the priests; who in their sermons and publications applauded the work of death and devastation, as an acceptable offering to the Divine Majesty: one Jose Agostino, a monk and court preacher, published a pamphlet, called 'The Beast Flayed,' urging

the necessity of multiplying sacrifices, and recommending that the constitutionalists should be hanged up by the feet, and 'the people joyfully treated daily with fresh meat from the gallows.' To crown the atrocities of Don Miguel, he who had conspired against his father, who had usurped the throne of his brother, who had laughed at promises made, and oaths sworn, in the face of Europe, now attempted to assassinate his own sister, because she had been Don Pedro's regent, and had been faithful to his constitution: irritated by the absence of one of her servants, whom he suspected to have been sent to England for the purpose of making known the dreadful state of the country, this modern Nero burst into her room with a pistol, to which a bayonet was affixed, and attempted to strike her; but her chamberlain, the conde Camarido, who threw himself before the royal assassin, received the blow: he then fired at the princess; but the ball missed her, and killed a servant by her side: other domestics, however, interfered, and she was hurried away from his fury.

The necessities of the government increased, notwithstanding a forced issue of paper money; and recourse was had to the most rigid and ruinous expedients to fit out an expedition against Terceira, one of the Azores, and the only spot within the dominions of Portugal which remained true to its rightful monarch: thither the count Villa Flor, who, with the marquis Palmella and nineteen other general officers, had been condemned in his absence, had contrived to escape, and taken the chief command; but though the expedition sailed from Lisbon in the middle of June, and the troops succeeded in effecting a landing, they were totally defeated by the islanders under Villa Flor. In the mean time, the tyrant's interest was supported at Madrid by the great influence of his mother over the family of Ferdinand; who himself regarded Miguel with peculiar complacency, from the circumstance of his having destroyed a constitutional government: in the course therefore of the present year, he acknowledged his title to the throne of Portugal, although the

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

other sovereigns of Europe had the grace to keep aloof from any communication with his government: the Portuguese refugees, indeed, and the ministers of Don Pedro, insisted that they ought to do more, and drive him from his throne by positive interference: these applications were addressed particularly to the British ministry, on the strength of treaties subsisting between the two countries; but lord Aberdeen, though he admitted to their fullest extent the obligations created by those treaties, maintained that they gave no countenance to the demand of an armed interference on our part, in order to remedy the consequences of an internal revolution: considering that no distinction ought to be made between the two claimants of the Portuguese crown, ministers professed their resolution to observe a strict neutrality in regard to all military operations: when therefore a considerable number of Portuguese exiles resident on our southern coast appeared to have some design of fitting out an expedition, the Brazilian minister was informed that government would not permit such a scheme to be carried on in British harbors; and that for security's sake these refugees must remove farther from the coast: the envoy then declared, that those troops were about to be conveyed to Brazil; and accordingly, four vessels, having on board 652 officers and men, under the command of count Saldanha, set sail from Plymouth; but the British ministry, suspecting their intention of landing at Terceira, despatched an armed force, under captain Walpole of the *Ranger*, to cruise before that island, with instructions to use force, if necessary, to drive them from the coast; also to keep them in sight, until convinced, by the course they were steering, and the distance to which they had proceeded, that they had no intention of returning to the western isles. The suspicions of our government were in this instance justified; for the Portuguese armament appeared off Terceira, and was discovered by captain Walpole standing right in for Port Praya: two shots were then fired for the purpose of bringing them to, but without effect; when the ship, on board of which was Saldanha him-

self, appeared determined to push in at all hazards, a shot from point-blank distance was fired into her, which killed one man, and wounded another: the vessels then lay to, and an angry correspondence ensued; but the Portuguese were driven off, and watched by the British commander, until they arrived within 500 miles of Scilly; captain Walpole, after this noble exploit, in which without doubt he was a reluctant agent, then returned to his station; and count Saldanha proceeded to Brest.

Such an occurrence excited much notice in Europe, and was brought under discussion in the British parliament; being represented as a direct act of hostility in favor of the detestable usurper against the acknowledged queen of Portugal, then residing in England: it was considered as an armed interference for Miguel, at the very moment when we pretended that the duties of neutrality prevented our interference altogether; and it was asked,—if we were not bound by treaties to assist the queen in recovering her crown, whence arose our right to prevent her from making any attempt by means of her own subjects? Why, when recognising her right, refusing to admit the title of Miguel, and pretending to maintain a strict impartiality, had we interfered by force against a lawful sovereign?

In answer to this, it was alleged, that the warlike armament lately attacked, had been fitted out in an English port: whether the observance of neutrality between two competitors for the crown of Portugal, one claiming it by direct succession, the other by a vote of the Cortes, and in actual possession, was right or wrong, appeared in this case a matter of indifference; but as it had been decided on, no other course could justly have been taken; and if Miguel's armament had been fitted out in a British port, it would have met with a similar interruption. In fact, if ministers were to be attacked, the object of attack ought to have been their maintenance of neutrality toward a perjured tyrant, who had voluntarily sworn to our government that he would obey the laws, and

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

preserve the constitution of his country ; not their adoption of proceedings, which that maintenance of neutrality rendered imperative : in the mean time, negotiations had been going on at Rio Janeiro between Don Pedro and the ministers of England and Austria, to effect some arrangement of affairs ; while a deputation had been sent by the Portuguese constitutionalists, to point out the true state of those affairs, and urge him to adopt active measures : Pedro, however, refused to accept propositions from foreign negotiators, which involved any sacrifice of his daughter's claims ; while he assured the Portuguese, that he would act so as to show his determination to maintain the rights of their queen, without entering into any compromise with the usurper of her throne : he did not, however, strengthen the hopes of his friends, at this time, by the resolution which he adopted of recalling his daughter from England to Brazil ; and the British government itself remonstrated with him on the impolicy of that step : but he had ulterior objects in view, which they could not penetrate.

The history of Spain this year furnishes but few events of importance : in the early part of it, Ferdinand lost his queen ; and before its close, he contracted a third marriage with a princess of Naples, the celebrated Christina ; to the great dissatisfaction of the adherents of his brother, Don Carlos : conspiracies in Catalonia, supposed to have been excited by the count d'Espagne for the sake of private advantage, were followed by cruel executions ; but the rest of the country remained tranquil : its finances, however, were in so dreadful a state of exhaustion from a long continuance of misgovernment and exclusion, that Cadiz was declared a free port, in the hope of alluring back foreign commerce to one of its old and favorite abodes : but at this very time, the Spanish government, which had been driven from the English money market by its faithless conduct respecting the Cortes bonds, ran the risk of losing its credit with all European states, by a discovery of its fraud in the celebrated case of the French loan. It would lead us too far from our

limits to detail the affairs of the South American states; but those provinces, though lost to Spain, were as yet far from the attainment of internal tranquillity: the struggles of anarchy, for the cause of republicanism, abetted by superstition on one side, and infidelity on the other, were now beginning.

Toward the end of this year, the attention of the British nation was withdrawn from foreign transactions to the general and increasing distress of its own population among the agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial classes: the undoubted existence of this distress was assigned to various causes, according to the conflicting tenets or interests of the reasoners: free trade, a metallic currency, and the low prices of agricultural produce, were each insisted on as the origin of those evils which afflicted the country; while the prohibitory system in commerce, an unrestricted paper currency, and high protective duties for the corn-grower, were proposed in turn, with equal confidence, as remedies. Whatever causes aggravated the general suffering at this period, its chief origin might be traced to the enormous pressure of our national debt, arising from a reckless war expenditure, which bore heavily on productive industry: to the evils which affected the agricultural classes, were to be added the fatal effects of the poor laws, tending to ruin the farmer by the same system of expenditure which demoralised the laborer; also that reduction of the circulating medium completed last year, which, by almost doubling taxation and crippling industry, contributed to augment the general perplexity and dissatisfaction. With regard to our manufacturing and commercial interests, the competition of other nations, since the peace, had destroyed those high profits which counterbalanced the exactions of the revenue: neither had trade yet recovered itself, or commercial enterprise regained its elasticity, since 1826, when speculation, with its consequent panic, occasioned such immense pecuniary losses: nor can it be denied, that the new system of trade and commerce increased the evil, by throwing numerous hands out

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

Commer-
cial and
agricul-
tural dis-
tress.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1829.

of employment, in its transition state from restriction to comparative freedom. To these more serious causes of calamity were added a bad harvest and a severe winter; all which contributed to bring the productive classes of the community, and especially the lowest orders, into a state of suffering and misery, which every one, except the minister and his adherents, together with those who lived on the produce of the taxes, acknowledged to be real: unfortunately, the wretched artisans, ignorantly ascribing the reduction of wages, not to the necessities of trade, but to the avarice of their employers, had recourse to their usual correctives, voluntary idleness and destruction of property. The example was set by the silk-weavers of Spitalfields and Bethnal-green, and the mischief done had not been equalled for sixty years: the same spirit showed itself at Macclesfield and Coventry; nor did the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire escape the contagion: in all these places, machinery to an immense amount was destroyed; and the artisans who showed a disposition to labor in their vocation rather than to riot, were subjected to violent outrages from their fellow-workmen, until the arrival of troops, and the apprehension of many active rioters, restored some degree of tranquillity. Lawless and mischievous as these proceedings were, a great load of deplorable misery lay at the bottom: labor no where received its adequate remuneration; and so low were the wages received in many branches of manufacture at this period, that a report, drawn up at Huddersfield by a committee of masters appointed to investigate the condition of working people, stated, 'that within the several townships engaged in fancy business, there were 13,000 individuals, who had not more than twopence halfpenny per day to live on; out of which they had to pay for the wear and tear of their looms.' It never can be too often or too strongly insisted on, that the first and greatest object of statesmen and legislators is to discover, not only the means of employment, but the adequate reward of labor: this is the grand method of rendering a nation contented,

prosperous, and powerful: without this, most difficult will be its improvement in those principles which form the best foundation of its happiness.

CHAP.
LXVI

1830.

With regard to Ireland, that unfortunate country had been thrown into such a state of excitement by the harangues of the member for Clare, that scenes of violence and outrage, like those from which the emancipation bill was to relieve it, soon presented themselves: the feelings of parties still continued in full force; hostile meetings, with a considerable loss of life, took place in the counties of Armagh, Leitrim, Cavan, and Monaghan, where nothing but the presence of a military force prevented open war; while in Tipperary, matters proceeded to such a length, that the magistrates expressed an unanimous opinion, that nothing but a revival of the insurrection act would secure the peace of the country: this however could not be effected; for it had not been suspended, but had actually expired, and parliament was not sitting.

State of
Ireland.

It certainly was soon perceived, that catholic emancipation had failed to lay the spirit of discontent; and that the pacification of our sister island still remained to exercise the ingenuity of British statesmen. Ireland never has been, nor is she likely soon to be, cordially united with her conquerors: so feeble indeed is the connexion, that it would long ago have been dissolved, but for the superior might of England: yet if Ireland has always been a drag on this country; if she has been a source of weakness rather than of strength; an angry foe instead of an attached friend;—she has been what the general conduct of England made her: even during the period when the religion of the two nations was the same, the state of affairs was but little better; for a spirit of tyranny and rapacity was ever at work, transferring the rich lands of that unfortunate country to her ruthless invaders; and the fiery disposition of her sons was purposely roused by insults and injuries to rebellion, in order that they might be plundered with a greater show of propriety: the reformation never obtained a footing among her native inhabitants; and instead of allowing to others that

CHAP.
LXVI.

1830.

freedom which we claimed ourselves, we employed our troops to turn the priests out of their churches and livings, which parliament transferred to the clergy of its own communion, though their adherents did not amount to one-tenth of the population. When this transfer, however, was effected, a large portion of the landed property still belonged to the catholic nobility and gentry; so that their spiritual guides were not wholly left to depend on the contributions of a starving peasantry: but the Irish having taken part with the Stuart dynasty, nearly nine-tenths of the intire property of the realm were confiscated under Cromwell and William III., and given to protestants: these, looking up to England for support, considered the poor natives, hutted on their estates, rather as implacable foes than as tenants and dependents: hence the little sympathy that has ever existed between the upper and lower classes. Indeed, most of the landholders soon quitted the country, letting their estates to middlemen, by whom they were sublet, on the most exorbitant terms, to the wretched peasants, who have been brought to as low a state of misery as any serfs in Europe: in the mean time, a comparatively small party, under the banners of an Orange confederacy, have held a tyrannical sway over the land, perverting or denying justice, and perpetuating the most intolerable abuses.

When the foundation of this system was laid, the population of Ireland did not exceed 2,000,000; but it has now risen to 8,000,000, of which no less than 6,500,000 are catholics; so that all arrangements derogatory to their character and interests daily become more offensive: besides, by their own exertions they have acquired political power, and are enabled to return a large body of representatives to parliament. Of these circumstances the great agitator has taken advantage; urging the people to remonstrate, to proclaim their wrongs, and to demand full participation in all those salutary institutions, which they were taught to expect when they consented to the union: at the same time, while he stimulates them to claim

equal privileges and equal laws, he represses outrage, and teaches them to agitate within the pale of the law, and by legal means.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1830.

Against these their claims there exist many and strong antagonist forces. There is that in the very nature of popery which seems to forbid protestants to arm it with power, or to advance its interests; there is the influence of great families, enriched with Irish spoil, who have by length of time acquired a title to this property; there is a tory faction in England, desirous of punishing the Irish people for contributing so effectually to extinguish their privileges and reform the British legislature; nor are they less anxious to uphold in full vigor a church establishment, which has always proved most fruitful in advantages to the scions of our aristocracy. Thus the whole empire has been kept in a perpetual ferment, to the grievous injury of all classes; nor has any definite plan of remedial measures yet been proposed, without being found impracticable or insufficient. One party, ascribing all the evil to popery, declares that a leaf must be taken out of William the Conqueror's book; and that a system, so false and anti-social, so incompatible with civil and religious liberty, must be extirpated: another asserts, with equal confidence, that the grand nuisance is a protestant establishment; which, being repudiated by the great mass of the people, ought to be cut down to the immediate wants and necessities of those who respect its doctrines: others ascribe the existing misery to absentee landlords, and a want of provision for the destitute poor: true, says a different set; a body of men more indifferent to the welfare of their tenantry and laborers does not exist, than the Irish landed proprietors; but to charge these persons with all the evils which afflict the country, is as absurd as to lay them at the door of the established church: their root lies far back; for it has been the custom, from time immemorial, to divide the paternal inheritance, whether freehold or leasehold, among every surviving member of the family; which division and

CHAP.
LXVI.
—
1830.

subdivision of property cuts the land into patches, and rapidly breeds an agricultural population, clothed in rags, fed on potatoes, and worked like slaves; in order, therefore, to produce any degree of comfort, the first step must be to clear away the present occupants of the soil, rather than to stereotype the evil by a system of parochial settlements;—ejection and emigration consequently are the best modes of relief: not a few advise the outlay of capital in Ireland, and the employment of her redundant population in works of general utility; forgetting, that before this can be done, tranquillity must be established by some other means; since no capitalist will expend his money, or exert his industry, where life and property are insecure: where ‘his yard-measure is a sword, and his ledger only a return of killed and wounded.’

Thus, encompassed with evils, the unhappy country has clung, with a species of unerring instinct, to its great agitator, who accelerated the first grand measure which opened a prospect of independence to catholic Ireland: even from their miserable pittance, the half-starved peasantry joyfully contribute a portion to remunerate their benefactor, for his loss of time, and sacrifice of professional emoluments; and, while his power, greater than that which any subject of this empire ever before possessed, is met by scoffs and insults in some quarters, and by alarm and terror, or indignant denunciation in others, he proceeds on his course; flinging back the reproaches of his adversaries, and taunting them as the instruments which raised him to this height. ‘Recall this power,’ he says, ‘which you have given me, by the concession of justice to my country: then shall I sink back into the ranks of the people, and become as harmless as the lowest peasant.’

Under such evils, mixed up as they are with the very form and constitution of society in Ireland, the most important business of the empire is interrupted; a military force is kept up in the country as large as that which is necessary for the protection of British India; and the very existence of an ad-

ministration depends on the countenance which it may receive from a body of Irish agitators. To predict how long such a state of things can last, or to point out how it can be altered, is not necessarily demanded of the historian: he has fulfilled his duty, when he has fairly and impartially laid the case before his readers: but, as it is impossible to remedy these evils by force of arms, in the present disposition of the British house of commons and of the Irish agitators, the great aim of our legislators should be the discovery of a different mode of cure. This, in fact, is now the grand problem in our national policy. While to its solution the abilities of statesmen are steadily directed, all party feeling should be laid aside, all animosity forgotten: it is only to be effected in a time of peace; and if war should overtake us in circumstances which might be called a premium for invasion, Ireland would probably be lost.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1830.

Our domestic annals this year were marked by the conflagration of York Minster, that glory of English architecture: great part of the choir, with the organ, fell a sacrifice to the devouring element; but the noble east window was fortunately preserved with little damage: the fire was traced to a man named Martin, brother to the celebrated artist of that name, who was subsequently tried for the crime at York, and found to be insane: but a meeting was immediately held, and a sufficient subscription raised by the nobility and gentry of this great aristocratic county, for the purpose of restoring its magnificent cathedral, after the original plan, under the direction of Mr. Smirke. London received additional beauty and convenience from the opening of the new Fleet, or Farringdon, Market; forming a handsome quadrangle of 232 feet by 150, and standing on a surface of one acre and a half: the purchase of its site, and the expense of buildings, was estimated at about £280,000. The New Post Office also, one of the finest edifices by which the capital is ornamented, was opened in September for the transaction of business, and an improved

Domestic
events.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1830.

system was adopted for sorting, arranging, and delivering letters. A still more important alteration however took place this year in the police establishment of our metropolis, for the institution of which the public owes a large debt of gratitude to Mr. Peel.⁶ In the admirable regulations drawn up for the instruction of this domestic force, the grand object attended to was the prevention of crime: the whole metropolitan district was formed into five local divisions, each division into eight sections, and each section into eight beats; the limits of all being clearly defined, and distinguished by letters and numbers: the force itself was divided into companies, each company having one superintendent, four inspectors, sixteen serjeants, and 144 police constables; being also subdivided into sixteen parties, each consisting of a serjeant and nine men: accurate rules were laid down for the commencement and regulation of their duty; and during the late times of change produced by the imperative nature of circumstances on our institutions, nothing has contributed more to the repression of tumult, and to the security of person and property, than this corps: several years however elapsed before the corporation of the city of London could be persuaded to follow such an example, and give up their vested interests in the old system of watchmen.

Meeting of
parliament.

It was not without some excitement of public indignation, that, when parliament assembled on the fourth of February, the royal speech contained only a very qualified admission of the existence of national distress. In the latter part of the preceding year, our premier had made an extensive tour through various districts of the country; but having been confined almost wholly to the mansions of his noble hosts, where a splendid hospitality awaited him, he had very little opportunity of witnessing the misery under which the lower orders were at this time groaning: accordingly, as he may be said to have seen none, he very confidently asserted that none existed; and as it is not

⁶ Now sir Robert Peel.

usual to dispute the word of a military premier, the other members of administration, somewhat in the manner of a Turkish divan, bowed their heads submissively to the dictates of their chief.

In the house of commons, however, this incorrect and injudicious assertion produced so much indignation, that sir Edward Knatchbull, a county member of the high tory party, proposed an amendment to the address, assuring his majesty, 'that distress was general among all the productive classes of the community;' and being supported by 105 votes, he left ministers, who had but 158, in a weak majority of 53: the amendment, proposed in the upper house by earl Stanhope, being vitiated by his notions on the currency question, was supported by a minority of only nine. The cession of the catholic claims had produced a sort of approximation between the duke and the whig party, who became unwilling to abandon him to tory vengeance, though their friendship was but lukewarm and self-interested; without it, however, the ministerial forces must have been routed at the very opening of the campaign. Lord Blandford, next day, when the report was brought up, moved what he called 'a wholesome admonition to the throne,' by way of appendage to the address; but this vindictive effusion, though seconded by Mr. O'Connell, and teeming with denunciations against our corrupt borough system, was repudiated by all true reformers, and found only eleven votes in its favor: fair warning, however, was given to ministers, that they must enter into a closer connexion with the whigs, if they wished to reckon on their support: sir Francis Burdett, in his speech, said, that 'when the prime minister of England was found so shamefully insensible to the suffering and distress which were painfully apparent throughout the land; when, instead of meeting such an overwhelming pressure of calamity with some measure of relief, or at least, some attempt at it, he sought to stifle every important inquiry; when he called that a partial and temporary evil, which was both long-lived and universal;—he could not look on such a mournful crisis, in which

CHAP.
LXVI.

1830.

public misfortune was insulted by ministerial apathy, without hailing any prospect of change in the system that produced it. What should we say to the ignorance, that could attribute our distresses to the introduction of machinery, and the application of steam,—that noblest among human inventions, to which men of science and intelligence mainly ascribed our prosperity? He felt high and unfeigned respect for the premier's abilities in the field; but he could not help now thinking, that his grace had done himself only justice, when he said, a few months before he accepted his present office, that he should be fit to inhabit an asylum of a certain nature, if he were ever induced to take such a burden on his shoulders; in fact, both he (sir Francis) and many honorable members around him, had long treated this illustrious individual with much tenderness, because they felt that he had conferred immense benefits on his country: he was the only man in England who could have accomplished what he had done; but his praise had been in proportion, and his recompense commensurate, in returns of confidence and approbation: the time, however, was now come, when it would be necessary for him to do more.'

A motion for inquiry into the state of national distress by a committee of the whole house of peers, was made by lord Stanhope; when the earl of Eldon found himself in the strange and unusual situation of an opposition lord, condemning the language employed in the king's speech, while he accused his ancient colleagues of coming down to parliament with a declaration that there were 'other causes' for the distress of the country, which they did not deem it expedient to specify; and which they left for each man's sagacity to guess at as he might. The duke of Wellington, while he still denied that the existence of distress was so extensive as had been represented, and supported his opinion by the augmented consumption of various articles, by the increase of buildings, by the state of our saving banks, and by the advancing traffic on railroads and canals, maintained that the power of redress was beyond the reach of parliament; and he defied

noble lords opposite to do any thing on the subject, which should be at once politic and satisfactory, expedient and efficacious: was it then right for parliament to interfere, where it was utterly impossible to do good? The noble mover might recommend a committee; but to what end would they follow his counsel, if he could lead them no farther? and not one step farther could he go.

The marquis of Lansdowne had no hesitation in declaring what he confidently thought were the causes of distress: though fully aware that much of it might have been produced by transition from a state of war to peace, yet he could not help recollecting, that a very great part of the difficulties, out of which we now had to extricate ourselves, was to be ascribed to that fatal perseverance, with which, during so many years, we had persisted in contracting permanent money engagements in a depreciated currency: that was the root of the present evil; but, in saying so, he did not forget, that unfortunate as those engagements were, they nevertheless were engagements, which the honor of parliament was bound to respect, and which we must find means to discharge: it was, however, one thing to see the cause, and another to point out a remedy: the only one which he saw at present likely to unite all opinions, was retrenchment, qualified by a diminution of taxation. Lord King proposed, as an amendment, the appointment of a select committee; but this was received with as little favor as the original motion; which was lost, on a division, by 118 against 25.

But the most remarkable debate arose in the house of commons, on a similar motion made by Mr. Davenport. In the course of its discussion, which lasted four nights, the leading members of all parties delivered their opinions, which were in many respects contradictory, on the extent as well as on the causes of the evil. The opponents of the motion considered the ultimate views of its supporters as directed to the restoration, or at least to a modification, of our paper currency; and that to grant it, would be a public

CHAP.
LXVI.

1830.

announcement that some such measure was intended: most members seemed to think, that, even if errors had been committed, to undo now what had been done, would occasion more harm than good: if there were any particular measures, it was said, which individuals thought likely to be beneficial, let them be brought forward, and let each be discussed on its own merits: thus the subject would assume a manageable form; but by launching forth into an investigation which included every question, the house would only cause fruitless excitement, and awaken hopes that would end in disappointment: the result, therefore, was a complete ministerial triumph, and a signal defeat of those who advocated a paper currency and high prices; comprehending not only the ultra tories, but several great landed proprietors noted for opposite political sentiments. Lord Althorp, with the leading members of the whig party generally, as well as Mr. Huskisson and his political disciples, sided with the ministry; and the original motion was abandoned, after an amendment, proposing a select committee, had been thrown out by the enormous majority of 255 to 87.

When this question was set at rest, the real amount of business transacted in parliament was not very important; though the present session was distinguished by a length of debate, on many topics, beyond all precedent: the absurd and mischievous practice, which had lately grown up, especially in the lower house, of suffering the least competent members to make long speeches on every trivial occasion, fruitlessly consumed the time that should have been devoted to action; many important questions were postponed to a period too late for settlement; the accumulation of business outgrew the powers of ministerial industry or capacity; and, what was still worse, the character of the house itself began to be deteriorated by the retirement of many respectable members, who were unwilling to sacrifice their own health, and the comfort of their families, to that insane ardor for speaking, which now pervaded the assembly.

Throughout the discussions with which this session commenced, members who opposed government, as well as most of those who supported it, had insisted on the necessity of reducing taxation, and curtailing the public expenses. Ministers had declared themselves willing to adopt every practicable saving; and any backwardness in that respect was a disposition, in which the whigs could not possibly support them; yet they found themselves under a necessity of resisting various propositions, which were brought forward as measures of proper and salutary retrenchment. The opposition raised against the army, navy, and ordnance estimates was more than usually loud; the number of men proposed for land service being 88,164 (after the intended reduction of 7000); and that for the navy 20,000 seamen, with 9000 marines: Mr. Hume and other members, after animated debates, were defeated, in their proposal for a farther reduction, by large majorities; but the opposition was less unsuccessful in several attacks on the details of expenditure. On the twelfth of February, sir James Graham, who had acquired considerable reputation as a speaker, moved for a reduction of salaries paid to official persons; and the foundation of his motion was, that, subsequently to the Bank restriction act, all had been augmented on the plea of an increase in the expenses of living; therefore, as the restriction had been removed, and we had returned to cash payments, these salaries ought now to be diminished: from this rule he meant indeed to exclude the privy purse and royal establishment, since they stood on arrangements entered into at the beginning of the reign, and ought not to be violated: but the motion was opposed by Mr. Dawson, secretary of the treasury, on the ground, that government had done all that as yet was possible in the way of retrenchment, and still felt a desire to proceed in a spirit of practical economy; he therefore met the question by proposing a resolution himself—for a humble address to his majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to lay before the house an account of the progress which had been made in

CHAP.
LXVI.

1830.

an inquiry into the various departments of the civil government instituted in the year 1821; such being one of those convenient resources that ministers keep in reserve, to dispose of questions which they find it difficult or disagreeable to grant; and by aid of this wind they now steered between the Scylla and Charybdis of aristocratic displeasure and general discontent. On the twelfth of March, sir James, who was rising fast to popularity on independent principles, brought forward a motion to consolidate the treasurership of the navy with some other office, and was supported by 90 votes in a house of 278: this encouraged him, on the twentieth of the same month, to propose an abolition of the office of lieutenant-general of the ordnance; when he was defeated by a still less majority of 200 to 124. In fact, all attempts to prove the necessity of either office, as a separate and expensive appointment, were opposed to the common sense of the house, as well as of the country; and the resolution thus manifested of clinging to such places for the mere purposes of party influence, disgusted many independent members, and contributed to alienate their confidence from the existing government. But an exposure still more injurious to the system of corruption, accompanied too by a signal defeat of ministers, had been already effected through a motion of sir Robert Heron, on the twenty-sixth of March: this went to strike out a sum from the navy estimates, which had been granted in pensions to the sons of two cabinet ministers—the honorable Messrs. Dundas and Bathurst—as reduced commissioners, after a service of *only four years*. ‘It was well known,’ said sir Robert, who imputed no blame to the young men themselves, ‘that their fathers were noblemen, who, for a great number of years, occupied, with little intermission, some of the most important situations in the government: viscount Melville, at the present moment, presided as first lord of the admiralty; and earl Bathurst was lord president of the council, one of the tellers of the exchequer, and joint clerk of the crown: their grandfathers were also men of high con-

sideration; one of them for many years filled the situation of lord high chancellor of England; and the other was a sort of viceroy of Scotland, holding places which produced great emolument, and performing services that were rather equivocal. Now, that these gentlemen, gorged with public money, should require for their families, or even condescend to accept, miserable pensions, and that too in a time of such public distress, did appear to him most paltry: the places given to Mr. Dundas and Mr. Bathurst were offices held during pleasure; and it was therefore in the power of government to dismiss them without pensions: what then must the country think of ministerial professions, when pensions like these were granted, not only without precedent, but without any adequate services performed? This scandalous job, which served to advance the cause of parliamentary reform in no small degree, was feebly defended by the chancellor of the exchequer and Mr. Peel: but it did not admit of a single real argument in its justification; and, on a division, the grant was disallowed; for ministers could obtain only 121 votes, against 139: their ominous defeat was followed by decreasing majorities during the remainder of this session; showing that public confidence was fast deserting those who were so unwilling to redeem their pledges; and who clung with such callous hearts to corrupt practices, which the public voice had now determined to denounce.

On the ninth of February, committees were appointed by both houses to take into consideration the charter of the East India company; in proposing which, it was declared, that government was free from all preconceived impressions, and in future proceedings would be guided by the result of this inquiry. A long debate also took place on a motion of Mr. Attwood, proposing to make silver a legal tender, as he maintained it had been before the bank restriction act of 1797, and to restore the circulation of small notes: the question underwent an able and full discussion; but the notion of a double standard seemed so objectionable, and any scheme for depreciating the currency appeared preg-

CHAP.
LXVI.

1830.

Financial
statements.

nant with such dangerous consequences, that Mr. Attwood consented to withdraw his motion without dividing the house.

On the fifteenth of March, the chancellor of the exchequer produced his annual exposition of the finances, which presented no remarkable features, except a repeal of the beer and leather duties; by which ministers desired to show their wish of alleviating the pressure of taxation on the lower classes. This remission of duty on beer, estimated at £3,000,000, was proposed to take place on the tenth of October following; and the reason given for such delay was, that the repeal should take place conjointly with an opening of the trade, when the time arrived for renewing the licenses of public houses. The measure without doubt proceeded from good motives; but the unfortunate junction alluded to, by encouraging the increase of public houses to an indefinite extent, has introduced immorality and crime into every corner of the land, where they were before almost unknown; and has probably occasioned more evil than any act passed during the whole period to which these pages refer.⁷ The demands of the public service, including the charge of our national debt, remained at £47,812,000; and the available income being estimated at £50,470,000, a probable balance of about two millions and a half only would be left for the sinking fund. In the revenue of last year, a deficiency of more than half a million below the estimate was acknowledged; but still a clear surplus of four millions had been applied to the redemption of the debt: to compensate for the loss of revenue from the repeal of beer and leather duties, it was proposed to make a small but salutary addition to those on ardent British spirits; and also to effect a yearly saving of £778,000, by the conversion of four per cent. stock into three and a half: these measures were subsequently carried into effect; and two motions by Mr.

⁷ Denounced, as it has been, by the united voices of the clergy, magistrates, and moral men among all classes, as filling our poor-houses and prisons with inmates, it is extraordinary that no christian legislator moves for its repeal—that no one among its promoters, seems anxious to relieve his conscience from so heavy a burden.

Hume and Mr. Poulett Thompson, for a general revision of the whole system of taxation, with a view to its reduction, were defeated.

CHAP.
LXVI.
1830.

A crude and unintelligible bill for the reform of parliament, brought forward by the marquis of Blandford, the title of which professed, not to prevent, but to regulate abuses, was negatived without a division; also in the case of East Retford, the proposal for transferring its franchise to Birmingham was ultimately rejected, and the privilege extended to the adjoining hundred. During the debate, Mr. Peel expressly disclaimed the imputations which had been thrown out, that this selection had been made with a view to increase the influence of the duke of Newcastle, whom the intervening catholic bill had now thrown into the ranks of opposition: but the circumstance was suspicious; and though due credit was given to the honorable secretary, that the resolution did not proceed on any bargain or understanding with the noble duke; yet there was a large portion of the house and of the country, which could not be brought to believe that a secret partiality for the aristocratic influence in boroughs had not influenced ministers in their determinations: the cause of parliamentary reform therefore advanced another step.

Instances
of parlia-
mentary
corruption.

On the third reading of the East Retford bill, a first attempt was made in the British parliament to introduce a principle, new to the representation of this country;—that of taking the votes of electors by ballot, which would protect them from all undue influence, whether of fear or corruption: for this motion, which was made by Mr. O'Connell, only twenty-one voices were raised; but among them, were those of lords Althorp, Nugent, and Ebrington: the idea seems to have originated in certain proceedings of the duke of Newcastle regarding the borough of Newark; where his grace was possessed of large property, partly held under a crown lease; and where he had always been able to control and decide the elections. In a late contest, the usual result took place, and Mr. Sadler, the duke's nominee, was elected in opposition to

CHAP.
LXVI.

1830.

serjeant Wilde: in consequence, a petition was presented to the house, stating that the successful candidate's return had been obtained through a prevailing belief, founded on experience of former elections, that such of his grace's tenants as should vote against his nominee would be expelled from their occupancies; that many, who gave their votes to the opposing candidate, had, since the election, received notice to quit their holding, whether the same was house or land, and whether it constituted part of the crown estate, or of his grace's private property: it was added, that the duke neither denied that such notices had been given, nor disclaimed them; but justified his conduct on a claim of right 'to do what he would with his own'—a concise and significant sentence, which quickly ran through the land, aiding and accelerating the cause of reform more than the longest speech ever uttered in parliament.

Mr. Poulett Thompson, in moving that the petition should be referred to a select committee, informed the house, not only that the use thus made of crown property affected the constitutional character of our representation, but that its original investment was a base ministerial job, which had caused a great pecuniary loss to the country: the duke of Newcastle's principal influence at Newark arose from about 960 acres of land surrounding the town; and these he held by a lease, granted in 1760, at a rent of only thirty-six pounds! the lease had been renewed in 1815, nine years after its expiration, at a rent of £2060, which fully attested the inadequate payment previously made: but it was still too low; since the estimated value was £3500, or at least £3000. The pecuniary loss, therefore, was worthy of attention; but that was a trifle, compared with the political purposes to which this property had been applied: the noble lessee himself never gave a lease for more than one year, in order to keep the voters completely under his power; and the petition stated the manner in which this power had been employed: if the allegations were true, the house was bound to interfere; for though he did not mean to

impugn the just and natural influence of a landlord over his tenant, he asked, whether the power arrogated in this case, did not rather resemble the tyranny of a slave-driver, than the proper influence of a British landowner? There was not, in the present case, any objection arising from interference with the rights of private property: this was a species of property, against the future abuse of which the house might guard, though they could not interfere with the existing lease; for they could address the crown, praying that it might not be renewed: with a view to have the allegations sifted, he moved that the petition be referred to a select committee. The indignation of Mr. Hobhouse was particularly excited, and his eloquence exerted on this occasion: ‘suppose,’ said he, ‘the king’s government should send to the duke of Newcastle, and let him know, that, when his lease expired, it should no longer be renewed; suppose that such an intimation was given to his grace, and it was understood or alleged that his ejection would take place in consequence of a vote given against administration on some great and leading question: if this were done, would it not be denounced as an attack on our dearest privileges; as an invasion of the most sacred birthright of Englishmen,—the liberty to assert and maintain their opinions? Compare then the conduct of government in such a case with that of the peer: here were these poor men, because they dared to vote against his candidate, banished from their homes, driven from their happy firesides, and deprived of all the comforts of life. Could such conduct, on the part of the noble duke, bear any comparison with the case of government depriving him of these crown lands, for giving a vote against them?’

Mr. Sadler rose to declare the petition a mere election paper, made up of wanton allegations and unfounded statements; while he vindicated his patron’s character for humanity and consideration, as regarded the inhabitants of Newark. Mr. Peel, however, defended at large the principle of the whole transaction, as well as the mode by which the land in question had been acquired: he could see no valid distinction

CHAP.
LXVI.

— 1830.

between this property, and that which descended to a man as a freehold from his ancestors. 'The lease,' he said, 'which his grace possessed of this crown land, gave him a right to deal with it as with any other portion of his possessions during that period; and in dealing with the property of the crown as with his own, it was obvious that he committed no breach of privilege: now the petitioners intirely confined themselves to the crown possessions held by the noble duke, praying that a lease of them might in future be refused to him; they did not even refer to his other property, with regard to which he had dealt precisely in the same manner: it was plain, therefore, that if, in the management of his own private possessions, he had committed no breach of privilege, he had committed none by dealing in a similar manner with the property of the crown. He would not say that the duke of Newcastle did not dispossess these tenants; but without entering into that question, he would say, that superior to the privileges of that house were other considerations, to which they were bound in duty and conscience to defer—namely, the rights of property: here was no allegation that menaces had been employed; there was only the fact that seven tenants had been dispossessed: now, if they were to control the rights of property, under the idea that those rights had been exercised in controlling an election, a precedent would be set, which might be not merely inconvenient, but positively dangerous; for nothing could be more dangerous than to say, they would not suffer any tenant to be dispossessed, who had voted in opposition to his landlord's wishes: it was in vain that honorable gentlemen exclaimed against the influence which any peer derived from the possession of property; there was no difference between that, and the influence which any other great landed proprietor enjoyed; nor could any species of reform exclude such influence: property, he contended, should always have an influence in that house, no matter whether it was in the hands of peers or commoners.' The motion for referring the petition to a select committee was

negatived by a majority of 194 against 61; but although the legal right in the present instance could scarcely be denied, the judicious exercise of it was another consideration; and as the people of England generally entertained an opinion on this point at variance with that of Mr. Peel and his colleagues, there can be no doubt but this transaction also accelerated the march of reform.

Of all the numerous plans for altering our system of representation, whether suggested by an honest desire to obviate a necessity of sweeping innovations, or springing from the designs of restless demagogues, there were none against which so little could be said as the proposition for conferring the elective franchise on populous manufacturing towns. When proposed to be effected, as in the case of Penryn and East Retford, merely by applying to this purpose privileges which became disposable through the gross delinquencies of corrupt boroughs, it assumed its most innocent form; not adding even to the number of our representatives: though lord John Russell therefore failed in his motion for transferring the elective franchise of East Retford to Birmingham, he did not hesitate to bring the subject again before parliament, by moving for a bill to confer that privilege, independently of all other considerations, on Leeds, Birmingham, and Manchester: and he founded this measure on the known practice of parliament, which extended such rights to unrepresented places, when they had acquired importance by their wealth and population. 'It was true,' he said, 'the proposal hitherto had been, that the franchise should not be conferred till the house had a forfeiture to dispose of; but it was now plain, that if the towns in question were to wait for such a transfer, there was no probability of their ever obtaining it; so numerous were the difficulties started in both houses of parliament: it also seemed not very reasonable, that the fitness of Leeds or Manchester to be represented should be said to depend on the good or bad conduct of the electors of Penryn or East Retford: their claims must rest on circumstances in their own

CHAP.
LXVI.
1830.

situation; and if that situation was such as to render it just and desirable that they should be represented, where was the sense of saying, that what was just and reasonable ought not to be done, because the electors of some other place had refused to do what was wicked?' His lordship then entered into various details, to show how great had been the increase of the towns in question; declaring 'that he could see no reason, why so many citizens and so much wealth should remain unrepresented, when the principle, as well as the practice of our constitution, had pointed out a method of admitting them into parliament. He knew it would be said, that there was no limitation to this principle: he confessed it; and he saw no reason why, if Sheffield, or any other town, should, at some future period, attain to the same rank, it should not obtain the same privilege; but it was not probable that the principle could ever be applied to more than four or five towns in the whole realm: parliament had not always been so fastidious in regard to the possible extension of a principle; witness the disfranchisement of the Irish forty shilling freeholders: he did not mean even to augment permanently the numbers of the house; for he should propose, that in future cases of disfranchisement, the privileges should not be transferred. The whole measure seemed to him incapable of alarming the most timid person, and ought to be received joyfully by the determined adversaries of dangerous innovation: moreover in looking at the state of other countries, he felt still more strongly the conviction of its good policy: we could not shut our eyes to the fact, that a collision between royal authority and popular resistance was rapidly approaching in France, though all must regret that some compromise was not contemplated to save society from its consequences: it was for us then to profit by the warning, and awaken in time to a perception of the nice mechanism of our own representative government: it behoved those, who, like himself, were lovers of liberty without disorder, and of peace without slavery, to watch anxiously at such a period;

CHAP.
LXVI.
—
1830.

endeavoring so to accommodate our system to altered times and circumstances, as to render it worthy of the respect and affection of our people. The constitution itself supplied us with the means; we had only to use its own renovating principles: its fabric was not, as many seemed to imagine, that of a Grecian temple, perfect and complete in all its parts, which could not suffer alteration without the destruction of its symmetry; it was more like a Gothic structure, susceptible of enlargement, consistently with the integrity of its ornaments and the security of its duration.'

The moderate views on which this bill was founded were enforced by lord Sandon, Mr. Brougham, Dr. Lushington, and Mr. Huskisson; but although, as the latter gentleman prophetically observed, the time was fast approaching, when ministers would be compelled to come down to the house with some measure, or to resign their situations, and nothing was more unwise than for a government to delay important propositions, till driven forward by overwhelming majorities,—ministerial apathy and old prejudices prevailed; so that the motion was negatived by 188 votes against 140.

Instead of setting themselves resolutely and soberly to work in reforming abuses, the high conservative party sat mourning over what they called *sacrifices* already made, and trembling at the *consequences* which they anticipated: their condition may be estimated from a few passages in the correspondence of their great leader at this time with his brother lord Stowell. 'It is impossible,' says the ex-chancellor, 'to contemplate what is passing, and to which you refer, without apprehensions of a very serious kind: what is so passing, is a renewal, but more frightful, of the prospects of 1791-5. The occurrences of those days, involving the crown and houses of parliament, by express mention, in revolutionary projects, and the language—No king—gave them a treasonable character which enabled government to deal with them by law. This is now in their resolutions, declarations, and petitions, carefully avoided; which are more difficult to be dealt

CHAP.
LXVI.
—
1830.

with, because more difficult to be met by the existing laws: they are of course more dangerous. The sacrifice too of the test act, and the passing of the Roman catholic emancipation bill, added to the intimidation effected by the unpunished, or rewarded, threats of the Irish association of O'Connell and Co., have established a precedent so dangerous, so encouraging to the present attempts at revolution under the name of reform, that he must be, in my judgment, a very bold fool, who does not tremble at what seems fast approaching. Look too at France. What the duke of Wellington will do, I pretend not to guess. What will be said now about the fact, that all the occasional laws against sedition have been suffered to expire? *Heaven save us now! for in man there is no sufficient help.*⁸

Limitations
of capital
punish-
ments.

Owing to the praiseworthy efforts of Mr. Peel, a bill was passed this session for the limitation of capital punishment in cases of forgery: its principle went to remit that penalty, where the complainants, by due caution, could have protected themselves; and to retain it in other cases, such as forgeries of the great or privy seal, wills, warrants on the public funds, and orders for the payment of money. An amendment, proposed by sir James Mackintosh, confining the infliction of death to the forgery of a will only, was carried in the commons; but the bill was altered again by the lords; and, being brought back to its original principle, ultimately passed both houses. A long discussion took place in the commons, respecting the conduct of the attorney-general, in filing *ex officio* informations against the proprietor of a London newspaper; when the general impression on the house seemed to be, that the prosecutions complained of were harsh and vindictive; and that sir James Scarlett, notwithstanding his whig education, and a political life spent in opposition, was inclined to be a very harsh attorney-general, and was preparing to secede from his former friends and principles: he made one expiring, but futile attempt, to obtain popu-

⁸ Life, by Horace Twiss, vol. iii. p. 106.

larity, by a bill to alter the laws of libel, as they existed in what were called the six acts; one of which provided, that a second conviction for any seditious or blasphemous libel might be punished with transportation; and another demanded, that every person who published a newspaper should enter into a recognisance of £300 in London, and £200 in the country, with two sufficient securities, in order to guard against the circulation of such libels; and to ensure a fund, available toward the payment of any penalty awarded against their authors: by the bill now introduced, the punishment of transportation was to be repealed, but the securities raised to £400 in London, and £300 in the country. It was objected, that the repeal proposed was no boon; since it was known from the first that the power granted by the act would never be exercised; while the latter proposition was calculated to impose additional shackles on the press: when the bill therefore was in committee, a majority rejected this clause, on the motion of lord Morpeth; but, on the third reading, sir James, having brought down, or opportunely found, a more numerous attendance of ministerial members, moved and carried its restoration.

Committees of the house of commons, and the law commissioners, having found much to blame in arrangements for the distribution of justice in Wales, an act passed, this session, abolishing the separate system of Welsh judicature, and annexing it to that of England. By the same bill, the number of puisne judges was increased from twelve to fifteen; a new one being added to each of the courts of king's bench, common pleas, and exchequer: but in Scotland, a different system was pursued; for while the high court of admiralty and commissary court were abolished, the remaining court of session was diminished, by the subtraction of two from its fifteen lords ordinary, or working judges; on whose ability to get through their work it depends, whether the eight other judges, who sit, four and four, in two courts of review, shall have judgments brought before them.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1830.

Illness of
his majesty.

These, and some other objects of importance, among which may be reckoned lord Lyndhurst's bill for improving our courts of equity, which was again opposed by lord Eldon, engaged the attention of parliament, until it was interrupted by the sovereign's decease. His majesty's health had been for a considerable time in a precarious state; but the first bulletin was not issued till the fifteenth of April, when it was announced that he was laboring under a bilious attack, accompanied by an embarrassment in his breathing. The disorder was afterwards ascertained to have been an ossification of the valves of the heart, the symptoms continuing to vary; so that the patient enjoyed temporary intervals of comparative ease, though such an accession of bodily debility ensued, as rendered the slightest exertion painful: in consequence, a message was sent down, on the twenty-fourth of May, to both houses, stating that his majesty found it inconvenient to sign public documents with his own hand, and requesting parliament to provide means for the temporary discharge of that function of the crown, without detriment to the public service: a bill was accordingly passed, allowing the sign manual to be executed with a stamp; such instrument to be used in the presence of the king, by some person authorised by his majesty's word of mouth; the same person being also required to sign a declaration to that effect, in presence of certain high officers of state; nor was any document to be stamped, before its indorsement by three privy counsellors had taken place. This arrangement, so important to the public business, caused much discussion, and was the first true indication of the king's real condition to the people; from whom he had of late so intirely secluded himself, that even his death excited less sensation than usually follows the departure of a monarch. About the end of May, a favorable turn of the disorder gave rise to hope, and his majesty attended to public business; but this feeling soon passed away; for his chest became affected, blood was mingled with the expectoration, and general debility rapidly ensued.

CHAP.
LXVI.
1830.

Some short time before the final catastrophe, his majesty's physicians delicately but candidly intimated to him, that all farther endeavors to avert the stroke of death would be unavailing; when he calmly answered, 'God's will be done!' and subsequently received the holy sacrament from the hands of the bishop of Chichester: soon after, his voice became faint and low; for several days his words were scarcely articulated; his sleep was broken and disturbed; and he was constantly in need of assistance. Thus lay George IV. in the magnificent palace of the kings of England, surrounded by luxuries and splendor unknown to the greatest of his predecessors, when the angel of death approached, on the night of Friday, the twenty-fifth of June: he had slept little during the evening, and from eleven to three was in a restless slumber, opening his eyes occasionally when he suffered more than usual pain from a cough, which appeared to be occasioned by the impeded flow of blood through the left side of the heart; in consequence of which it was thrown back on the lungs so as to produce congestion: nothing, however, occurred till three o'clock which indicated any particular change, when the king beckoned to the page in waiting to alter his position: he was immediately obeyed; the couch, constructed for the purpose, was gently raised, and the sufferer lifted to his chair: but at that moment a blood vessel burst: the effect was apparent to his attendants, who hastened to apply the usual stimulants, and to call in the physicians; when the royal patient himself perceived that his dissolution was at hand, and exclaimed,—'O God, I am dying!' A few seconds afterwards, in a whisper scarcely audible, he added—'This is death!'—and when the medical men entered the apartment, George IV. had ceased to breathe.

Death of
George IV.

In estimating the character of this monarch, who was born with an amiable disposition, whose mind was highly cultivated, whose charity was great, and whose manners were perfect, let us not, while we acknowledge the imperfections which obscured those fine qualities, forget the powerful temptations to which he was

His cha-
racter.

CHAP.
LXVI.
1830.

peculiarly exposed; and if we see any thing to blame in his conduct as a prince, let us at least confess that he betrayed no desire unduly to extend the prerogative, or to curtail the just rights of his subjects. As regent, his name will ever be associated with the most splendid triumphs that adorn our annals; and although some of those triumphs may be said to have arisen out of peculiar circumstances and the spirit of the times, yet his reign was illustrated by the brilliant progress of intellect, and by a general improvement in the liberal arts, of which he was a munificent patron.

Accession
of William
IV.

As soon as the king's decease was known, his next brother, William Henry, duke of Clarence, was proclaimed by the title of William IV.; nor did the new monarch fail to acquire great popularity, by the simplicity of his habits and manners, as well as by the condescending familiarity of his intercourse with the people;—qualities, which lost none of their attraction by a comparison with the secluded and misanthropic kind of life which his predecessor had lately led. No immediate alteration took place in the government; for his majesty, after the usual oaths for the security of the church of Scotland, having signed such instruments as are requisite at the commencement of a new reign, re-appointed the judges and other great officers of state to the places which had become vacant, and signified to the members of the cabinet that he was anxious to retain their services: a revolution, however, had taken place in the feelings of their most important political supporters, which, added to national distress, and the disturbed state of public sentiment, soon occasioned, not only their retirement from office, but the greatest organic change in the British constitution that has taken place since the revolution of 1688.

CHAPTER LXVII.

WILLIAM IV.—1830.

Sentiments of the whigs—King proclaimed, and parliament opened—Addresses—Symptoms of disagreement between the whigs and ministers—Opposition of the tories—Explanations on both sides, and declaration of hostilities—First court of William IV.; his declaration to the prelates, reception of addresses, &c.—Prorogation and dissolution of the parliament—Measures taken by the whigs to pave their way to office—Revolutions in France and the Netherlands—Causes which rendered the elections in England unfavorable to ministers—Meeting of the new parliament—King's speech, addresses, &c.—Duke of Wellington's denunciations against reform—Other causes of popular dissatisfaction with the government; case of Belgium; postponement of the king's visit to Guildhall—Notice taken of it in parliament—Defeat of ministers, and resignation—State of parties—Formation of earl Grey's administration—Mr. Stanley's defeat at Preston—Regency bill passed—Parliament adjourns—Opening of the Liverpool and Manchester railway, and death of Mr. Huskisson—State of foreign nations—State of public mind regarding parliamentary reform—Introduction and progress of the reform bill through the house of commons—Dissolution of parliament—New parliament assembled—Progress of the bill continued—Budget, &c.—Advance of the bill through the house of commons—Bill read a first time in the upper house—Opening of London Bridge—King's assent to the queen's dower-bill—Grant to the duchess of Kent—Coronation—Progress of the reform bill in the lords—Rejection of it—Prorogation of parliament—State of the country—Appearance of cholera in the north—Foreign affairs—Parliament assembles—Re-introduction of the reform bill—Its progress to its final settlement.

THE whigs, already uneasy, because the session had passed away, and no approach had been made by ministers to a closer and more profitable union, now saw a new reign commencing, and a new parliament about to be chosen, without any invitation given, or

Sentiments
of the
whigs.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

Proceed-
ings in
parliament.

hope held out to them: indeed, it became evident that government was prepared to stand the chance of a general election without their assistance, being anxious to place itself in such a position as to be independent of their support: the time therefore had now arrived, when it became necessary for them to try their strength, if they hoped ever again to participate in the sweets of office. The proclamation of the new king having taken place on the twenty-eighth, his majesty, next day, sent down his first message to parliament; when an address, in answer to that part of the message which related to the death of the late monarch, was immediately moved by the duke of Wellington in the upper, and by sir Robert Peel in the lower house, seconded respectively by lord Grey and Mr. Brougham; who recorded, in terms of affectionate gratitude, the exertions, by which his late majesty had, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty, maintained the external reputation and internal prosperity of these realms.

On the following day, however, motions were made for a second address, in answer to that part of the message which recommended a dissolution of parliament, as soon as means had been provided for carrying on the public service: the whigs then raised an opposition, under the plea that it was right to take into consideration the possible contingency of a demise of the crown; in which case, as the presumptive heir was a minor, it might be necessary to appoint a regency during the non-existence of parliament, unless it were determined to leave the country without a government: the only inconvenience that could occur, was that of their sitting a month longer; and why should they not sit, when so imperative a duty required it? The reasoning was plausible; but ministers answered, that the very importance of this question, and the difficulties which would undoubtedly rise in the course of it, as well as the caution which ought to be observed, were the strongest possible reasons against hurry at the end of a session, when the members of one house would be thinking more about the next election than present business: besides, there was no pressing necessity, no

prospect of danger from the king's health; on the contrary, lord Grey himself had affirmed, that his majesty's strong constitution and temperate habits gave promise of a long reign. Whilst inconvenience then was positive and present, danger was but imaginary and remote: it was in vain to say, that the object was to gain twenty-four hours' time for deliberation: yet even if that really were the case, the country would not so consider it: 'if the motion be agreed to,' said the duke of Wellington, 'it will be viewed as a complete defeat of ministers.'

His grace, who fully comprehended the views of the discontented party, found, in the ensuing discussion, that this was not the only opposition he had to expect: lords Harrowby, Winchelsea, and Eldon, the duke of Richmond, the marquis of Londonderry, earl Mansfield, and lord Wharnccliffe, one after another, stated their determination to vote for the amendment; nay, even lord Goderich himself expressed similar sentiments. Ministers and their friends railed against what they called 'an unnatural coalition between parties most opposite to each other in principle;' while lord Ellenborough called on earl Grey, to remember the confidence which he had expressed in the present administration, and the large debt of gratitude he had acknowledged as due to it, for 'the great measure of last session:' an unfortunate topic; since every allusion to it, by way of conciliating the whigs, called up afresh to the minds of the more influential tories those motives which had arrayed them against the government. 'Any attempt,' said his lordship, 'to overturn the administration, came with a peculiarly bad grace from that noble earl and his adherents.'—'I rejoice, however,' he continued, 'that we know, at last, who are our real opponents, and who our friends; even though I see, most unexpectedly, the noble earl in the array against us.'

Lord Mansfield, while he repudiated the idea of coalition, declared, that the peculiar circumstances of last year; the deep interest which, in common with other peers, he took in the measure then carried; and

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

the indignation which he felt, in common with them, on account of that measure,—had, during the present session, fastened the bonds which united him by a political feeling with many noble lords: they might have acted together, and there might have been a coincidence of opinion among some who formerly did not agree on many subjects; but there was no coalition: that which united them was a want of confidence in his majesty's government; a determination not to support his ministers; and a desire to bring forward such measures as might benefit the public: 'the present government,' said the duke of Richmond, 'is a government of mere expediency, full of vacillating proposals, never daring to propose and support measures on their own proper grounds.'

Earl Grey, in reply to the complaints of lord Ellenborough, assured the house, 'that he had never felt or expressed confidence in ministers: they had done well in carrying the catholic bill; they had received all his political and personal support; and that support, he could not but feel, was of some benefit to the cause: but he claimed no gratitude for what he had done; and, on the other hand, he owed none. As to general confidence, it was an idea which had never entered into his mind: his public declarations must be known to many of their lordships; and he was certain that in private he had often made the same statement: he had repeatedly expressed his opinion of the incapacity and vacillating policy of the present cabinet: how then could he have confidence in them or their measures?' On a division, ministers had a majority of 100 against 56; but the debate itself was a declaration of war; and it became evident, that their scheme of government, by balancing and trimming measures, so as to secure the aid of one section which trusted them not, against another, was now at an end.

In the lower house, the number of speakers was smaller, but the language was still more bitter; and sir Robert Peel had the mortification of receiving a lecture on the subject of consistency from Mr. Huskisson, and of being classed by Mr. Brougham among

‘the flatterers and fawning parasites of the duke of Wellington.’ Ministers carried the address by a majority of only forty-six; the votes for lord Althorp’s amendment being 139, and against it 185.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

On Saturday, July the third, king William held his first court at St. James’s; when a large number of public functionaries, foreign ministers, and nobility attended to pay their respects to the new sovereign: next day, being Sunday, he attended divine service at the Chapel Royal, and received the sacrament; at the conclusion of which ceremony, his majesty received the archbishops and bishops in the royal closet, where he professed to them ‘his unalterable attachment to the protestant religion, and his determined resolution to support the established church of England:’ after this, he met the judges in the great council chamber, and graciously complimented them on their upright administration of law and justice.

The funeral of the late king took place on the fifteenth of July at Windsor, with great pomp: on the sixteenth, his successor went over the whole establishment of the castle; and after accosting the domestics with great affability, gave orders for its future management: on the same day, the dean and chapter of Windsor attended with an address of condolence and congratulation; and early next morning, the king set off for St. James’s palace, to receive an address from the city of London. Many successive days were occupied by his majesty in reviewing the different regiments of guards, receiving loyal addresses, particularly from the universities, and conferring honors on several deserving individuals; while his activity astonished all who were not acquainted with his previous habits: nor did the condescension of the king and his royal consort toward every class of their subjects, together with numerous instances of their kind feeling and prompt liberality, fail to excite that spirit of loyalty, which, though it may for a time lie dormant, never ceases to dwell in British hearts, the best safeguard of the throne and constitution. Several important bills were frustrated by the want of time to

CHAP.
LXVII.
—
1830.

carry them through both houses; among which was one upon the subject of forgery; another for the introduction of trial by jury into the Scotch courts of session; and a third for the disfranchisement of East Retford. On Friday, the twenty-third of July, his majesty went in state to the house of lords, where the commons, with their speaker, were assembled: after a most gracious speech, he prorogued parliament, which was next day dissolved by proclamation; writs being ordered for the election of a new one, returnable on the fourteenth of September.

State of
parties.

The progress of the session just closed had broken up the alliance which enabled ministers to maintain themselves in office; and as this alliance, whilst it lasted, served to widen the breach between them and their ancient friends, they were destined in the ensuing elections to meet with a fierce and combined opposition. The duke of Wellington's administration could not be consistently accused by the whigs either of illiberality or extravagance; indeed, it had received their approbation as an honest, well-meaning government, until they discovered, toward the end of the session, that its good intentions did not go so far as to call them to share in the distribution of places: nor was it unnatural that they should feel resentment at this neglect; for so long a period had elapsed since they were debarred from office, that public sentiment began to take a turn in their favor throughout the country: nay, there were found some, even among their opponents, who thought it fair that they should have a trial; being averse to see one of the great parties in the state condemned to political annihilation: taking advantage of these feelings, and of the divisions already alluded to, the whigs very adroitly paved the way to a resumption of power. While the ministry was vehemently attacked on the score of incapacity, its leader was characterised as a domineering soldier, unfitted to conduct alone the government of a nation: yet determined to surround himself with men of mean capacity and dependent spirit, who would act as the unreflecting instruments of his

will. 'The duke of Wellington,' they asserted, 'illustrious as his services have been, must not suppose that the people of England will submit to him as their ruler, if the only condition on which he will consent to trample on them, is the retention of such colleagues as lord Aberdeen to manage our relations with the Polignacs and Metternichs, lord Ellenborough to dispose of India, and lord Lyndhurst to show how much worse the court of chancery can be conducted than by lord Eldon: his grace might be a useful and popular member of any government; but he must be content to employ significant figures, and not, by a vain effort of giving value to a row of ciphers, expose himself to the derision of the nation. The notion of the duke, it was said, being able to govern the country as sole minister, arose from the disunion of some parties, now no more; the want of decision in some individuals, now little regarded; the aversion to office in others, now likely to be overcome; but above all, from what was held necessary in the late king's time—a firm man to control him. A sovereign, who had no childish fancies to gratify; who did not one day want to get rid of his wife at the risk of a civil war, and another day to build palaces at the cost of a million; who had no minions to influence him, and no personal spites to gratify;—would never have required an unyielding minister to keep him in order; and the necessity of his grace, as premier, would never have been felt. With the duke's political failures abroad, and the deplorable state of his parliamentary campaign at home, much of this supposed necessity, even during the late king's life, had disappeared; but the demise of the crown had put an end to the whole delusion, and restored to the country the chance of a respectable administration; presenting, as it did, to the duke of Wellington, the fair choice of ceasing to govern at all, or of being content to govern with colleagues fit for the service of the state.'¹ Such were the sentiments studiously put forth by pamphleteers; and though the many offended tories did not

CHAP.
LXVII.
—1830.

¹ See Annual Register for 1830, p. 143.

CHAP.
LXVII.
1830.

deliberately act in union with the whigs, yet their influence took the same direction, to eject a ministry, by which they considered themselves deceived and betrayed.

Revolution
in France.

The spirit of opposition, thus excited, suddenly gained a great addition of strength by events, of which the continent became the scene. Scarcely had parliament been dissolved, when the French government was overturned by a revolution as unexpected, as were the measures which directly led to it. Its ministers, finding that the new elections only increased the number of their opponents in the legislative body, suddenly broke through the fences of the constitution, with a determination to establish a species of Prussian government, in which the material interests of the people should predominate over those that are intellectual and political: by a mere royal ordinance, they abolished the liberty of the press, cancelled the existing system of representation, and fashioned for the kingdom a new system of election, capable of producing a chamber of deputies more obedient to the royal will. Paris rose against these unconstitutional decrees; and armed troops were opposed to an armed rabble: misconduct, and want of faith in the former, left victory in the hands of the latter: the troops of the line refused to act; the guards, after two days of fruitless resistance in the streets, were forced to retire from the capital; and those members of the chamber of deputies, who were then in Paris, assumed the government. Amid the acclamations of a triumphant populace, they cut off, by their own decree, one-third part of the chamber of peers; they excluded Charles X., with all his descendants from the throne, as a violator of the charter, they transferred the crown to the duke of Orleans, with full powers of royalty; while they endeavored to beguile the multitude by a verbal innovation in his title, which was changed from 'king of France,' to 'king of the French.' Other attempts were made to carry out Lafayette's political paradox of a 'monarchy founded on a republican basis:' but Louis Philippe was too wise not to know that his

throne, if it stood at all, must stand on monarchical institutions; and it has been his constant aim gently, and almost imperceptibly, to acquire for it that only safe support. The rapidity of these events in France, and the complete triumph of insurgents over the resources of an established government, infected all quarters of Europe. In a short time, the inhabitants of Brussels were in open insurrection against local taxes: having met with success, they extended their views to the overthrow of their government, and a separation of the Netherlands from Holland: they repulsed the king's troops in an attack on the capital; established a provisional government; convoked a national congress; and, declaring Belgium an independent state, excluded the house of Orange from the throne. About the beginning of October the hereditary prince, as lieutenant-general of the Flemish provinces, removed the seat of government to Antwerp; whence he issued a proclamation, announcing that the separation of Belgium from Holland was acknowledged, and that he should take on himself the sovereignty of the former: but to this declaration no respect was paid; the king of the Netherlands was so displeased, that he revoked his son's commission; and the people busied themselves about the choice of a new monarch. Throughout Europe at this time the notion seemed to be, that a populace had only to rise, in order to make armies and governments vanish before it. In Britain, these events were hailed by the whigs with applause, as the dawning of a new and glorious day in the history of man: public meetings were held, to pass resolutions, commending the spirit with which the Parisians had shaken off encroaching despotism; deputations were sent to congratulate them on their triumph; and subscriptions proposed, to relieve the families of those who had suffered in the contest: the people were specially called on to remark, how little they had to fear from military power, since the citizens of Paris and Brussels had been able to set it at defiance; and how clearly they were intitled to be heard in the government,

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

Revolution
in Belgium.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

since it was so easy for them to make the government what they chose. The French ministry, besides, had contrived to put itself completely in the wrong: no moderate man could justify the despotic acts by which it had destroyed the constitution of the country, or blame the resistance which those acts had called forth: resistance too had been confined to its immediate object much more successfully than could have been expected, where an armed populace possessed all the power; for except during the actual fighting in the streets of Paris, no blood had been shed; no property had been violated: the head of the government indeed had been changed, but its monarchical form had been preserved, with a new intermixture of popular elements; while the deposed monarch, with several members of his family, and his suite, was permitted to embark quietly at a French port, in order to seek an asylum in Great Britain.

Popular
discon-
tents.

The excitement produced by these events had an effect on our elections very unfavorable to ministers; nor did this fail to bring forward the question of parliamentary reform in a more prominent and remarkable shape than it had yet assumed: the force of example now added itself to all other existing motives for change; and the notion of transferring the privileges of a corrupt borough to an unrepresented place, or giving the elective franchise to a populous town, was utterly discarded: in the present state of public feeling, there was no difficulty in getting up meetings, petitions, and addresses, advocating extensive alterations in our representative system; all of which, however vague and indeterminate in their respective conditions, tended to confer the elective rights on a much larger proportion of the people than had hitherto enjoyed them; nor were threats spared, that a refusal of these rights would lead to a general convulsion, in which the privileged orders might possibly be forced to yield much more than was now required. The alarm occasioned by such demands, and their accompanying menaces, was inexpressibly augmented by disturbances, which, beginning in the county of Kent,

spread themselves rapidly over the whole face of the country: the rioters did not at first assume the character of disorderly mobs, but appeared as lurking incendiaries, wreaking their vengeance on property; the destruction of which could only aggravate the causes of distress: night after night they lighted up conflagrations, by which an incredible quantity of grain, and even of live stock, was consumed: bands, still more daring, attacked machinery of all kinds, particularly thrashing machines, the use of which became so unpopular, that after a short time insurance offices refused a policy to those who kept them on their premises. The first offenders that were seized, being tried before county magistrates, met with that lenity which commiseration for their starving condition excited; but the evil spread in consequence so extensively, that all protection for property seemed to be at an end: bands of rioters pillaged and destroyed it during the day; and when night fell, simultaneous conflagrations, blazing up in different quarters, spread havoc and dismay far and wide over the land: at length, the military force in the most disturbed districts was increased; a reward of £500 was offered for the conviction of an incendiary; and a special commission was ordered to proceed into those counties where the worst outrages were committed: it may be remarked, however, that they were speedily and effectually suppressed in some places, where the yeomanry and farmers, mounting their horses and scouring the country, aided the civil officers in the discovery and apprehension of offenders.

Under such gloomy circumstances, the new parliament met on the twenty-sixth of October, and found parties in the same state as at the dissolution; with this difference only, that every element of opposition against the administration had acquired fresh vigor by the course of events, while new topics had sprung up, on which it would be forced to make a trial of strength: it appeared certain, that the question of reform would speedily be brought forward; and ministers may perhaps have flattered themselves, that its discussion

Opening
of new
parliament.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

would effect a reconciliation between them, and their former adherents. On the second of November, after the several members of both houses had been sworn in, and Mr. Manners Sutton unanimously re-elected speaker of the commons, the session was opened, with great splendor, by the king in person. His majesty, in his speech, alluded to the events of deep interest and importance which had occurred on the continent; to the continuance of his diplomatic relations with the new French dynasty; to the endeavors which, in concert with his allies, he was making to restore tranquillity in the Netherlands; to the maintenance of those general treaties, by which the political system of Europe had been established; and to the hope of renewing his diplomatic relations with Portugal, because the government of that country had determined to perform a great act of justice and humanity, by the grant of a general amnesty! In addressing the house of commons, he observed, that estimates for the ensuing year would be prepared with that strict regard to economy, which he was determined to enforce in every branch of public expenditure; and as, by the demise of the late king, the civil list had expired, his majesty placed, without reserve, at their disposal, his interest in the hereditary revenues, and in those funds which might be derived from the droits of the admiralty, from the West India duties, or any casual source; rejoicing in the opportunity of thus evincing his intire reliance on their dutiful attachment; and his confidence that they would cheerfully provide for the support of government, and dignity of the crown: after lamenting the disturbances which afflicted the country, and expressing a determination to employ all means which the laws and constitution had placed in his hands to repress them, he consoled himself with reflecting on the loyalty and affectionate attachment of the great body of his people; declaring, that it was the main object of his life to preserve them those blessings which they had so long enjoyed, and transmit them unimpaired to posterity.

Usual addresses were carried in both houses, though

not without evident signs of vigorous opposition to ministers on the subjects of reform and retrenchment. In regard to the latter object, every assurance was given by government, that reduction of expenditure and taxation should be carried as far as propriety and practicability would permit: on the other point, however, the duke of Wellington went beyond his usual prudence and reserve, in the peculiar state of public feeling: for at a time, when the people of England, bending beneath burdens almost intolerable, were recalling to mind the profligacy of statesmen, the subserviency of parliaments, and the corruption of institutions, recorded in our annals from the revolution up to the present time, and were ascribing these evils to the imperfect state of our representation, which had converted stocks and stones into constituencies, though populous towns remained unrepresented, and had enabled the proprietors of boroughs to make their own terms with ministers;—while such sentiments were at their height, his grace uttered his memorable denunciation against reform; and his deposition, as minister of this country, was irrevocably fixed. In replying to earl Grey, who had alluded to the subject, and candidly confessed that he had no definite plan to produce; the premier observed,—‘that, on his part, he would go farther; and would say, that he had never read or heard of any measure, up to the present moment, which could improve our representation, or render it more satisfactory to the country at large: he would not hesitate unequivocally to declare his opinion, that we possessed a legislature, which answered all good purposes, better than any which had been ever tried; and that if he had to frame a legislature for another country, his aim would be to form one which would produce similar results: under such circumstances, he was not only unprepared to bring forward a measure of reform, but ready at once to declare, that so long as he held a station in the government, he should feel it his duty to resist any such when proposed by others.’

In the house of commons, Mr. Brougham did not

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

wait even till the address was moved, before he gave notice, that on the sixteenth, he would submit a distinct proposition for a change in our representation; intending to take his stand on the ancient ground of the constitution, as it existed originally, in the days of its purity and vigor. Sir Robert Peel, though he did not speak in the same fearless, uncompromising tone as his chief, yet professed that he saw difficulties about the question, which he was by no means prepared to encounter: he wished nevertheless to say nothing then which might at all prejudice discussion hereafter, or interfere with its advance toward a satisfactory termination. These declarations were sufficient to spread widely the flame of discontent, which had been already kindled against government; and the consequences, both in and out of parliament, were formidable combinations to embarrass ministers, and thwart their measures. No little indignation was excited against them by the manner in which the king had been led, in his speech, to mention the revolution in Belgium, as ‘a revolt against an enlightened government;’ and to express his determination to maintain in regard to it those general treaties, by which the political system of Europe was said to be fixed. ‘All this,’ lord Grey observed, ‘sounded like threatened interference; and he could not conceive why we should be bound by treaties to interfere between Holland and the Low Countries: neither had we a right to express an opinion on the conduct of the Belgians; to praise the government which they had cast off, and stigmatise them as revolted subjects.’ Few countries, in fact, had been treated, at the new partition of Europe after the war, worse than Belgium; which had been joined to Holland for the convenience of others, who wished to raise a bulwark against the power of France: the junction was not attended with mutual affection, congeniality of habits, or even with a similarity of religion; and the Belgians considered themselves an oppressed people, not only because they had been forced into a connexion which they never would have sought, but because they found its terms and conditions unequal:

they complained that the king, a Dutchman, and stadtholder of Holland long before he was sovereign of the Netherlands, sacrificed his acquired to his hereditary dominions; that to Dutchmen was given a monopoly of the general administration; that even from Belgian offices Belgians were excluded; that they were taxed for Dutch debts, and for objects exclusively Dutch; that their religion, and institutions for education connected with it, were discouraged; that their very language had been banished from their own law courts, and their country treated altogether like a conquered province. These accusations, though untrue to the extent represented by democratic journals and catholic priests, were not without foundation; and the part known to have been taken by the duke of Wellington in cementing this ill-assorted union, together with his inclination toward continental despots, disposed people to suspect him of a design to interfere, on the present occasion, in a manner adverse to the Belgians; so that, confessedly, at this period, the popularity of himself and his cabinet, was declining, when a domestic circumstance occurred, which tended in no small degree to increase their embarrassment.

The king and queen had promised, some time before the meeting of parliament, to honor the lord mayor's feast at Guildhall with their presence; and great were the preparations made by the citizens on the approach of that civic festival: but whilst all were at the height of expectation, they were suddenly mortified by intelligence, that their chief magistrate had received a letter from sir Robert Peel, late on the evening of the seventh of November, stating, that the king, following the advice of ministers, had resolved to put off his visit to a future opportunity: the reason given for this determination was, that information, recently received, 'gave cause for apprehension, lest, notwithstanding the devoted loyalty of the citizens of London, advantage might be taken of the nocturnal assemblage of multitudes, to create tumult and confusion; and it would be a source of deep and lasting concern to their majesties, if any calamity were to occur on the occa-

Unpopu-
larity of
ministers.

CHAP.
LXVII.
1830.

sion of their visit to the city.' This announcement filled the metropolis with doubt and alarm; especially, as a disposition to mischief had been lately shown by the populace, directed principally against the duke and the new police: indeed, indications of hostile feeling had been so repeated and so strong, and inflammatory handbills had been so industriously circulated, that two members of the common council acknowledged they had warned his grace of the danger; and alderman Key, lord mayor elect, had apprised him of an attack intended to be made on his person: these circumstances induced the noble premier and his colleagues to decline the dinner; and as their absence would have been liable to a misconstruction little less serious than the danger to be apprehended from their presence, it was judged prudent to advise his majesty to relinquish his intention, in order to prevent tumult and bloodshed. As soon as this determination became known, consternation pervaded all ranks; men believed that some atrocious conspiracy against the royal person had been discovered, or even that a revolution was at hand; so that the public funds fell nearly three per cent., and mercantile confidence was greatly interrupted: instead of civic festivities, the city was now disturbed with the rumbling of artillery, and the march of soldiers; the Tower ditch was filled with water, and other precautions taken, to put that fortress into a state of security; extra guards were placed at the bank, and at the magazine in Hyde Park; while large bodies of troops were billeted in the metropolitan suburbs: scarcely however had two days elapsed, when people were laughing at the trepidation into which they had been betrayed; confidence was restored; and the funds rose as rapidly as they had fallen.

Meanwhile severe animadversions were passed in parliament on the conduct of ministers, for preventing his majesty's visit to the city; and the duke of Richmond, who began a discussion on this subject in the upper house, declared, 'that the king reigned in the hearts of his people; and that he might have gone safely, unaccompanied by guards, through every street

of the metropolis;’—an allegation, to which the duke of Wellington readily assented, as did sir Robert Peel in the other house: but they contended, that, although the royal personage might have been safe, his presence would have brought together a large and lawless multitude, bent on riot and outrage; when troops must have been called in for the suppression of tumult. Mr. Brougham took this occasion to contrast severely the king’s popularity with the hostility exhibited toward his minister: in regard to the latter, he observed;—‘I regret much its appearance; I regret it on account of the mischief which it is calculated to do in the mercantile world; I regret it also on account of its apparent connexion with that speech from the throne, which has been followed up by a still more fatal declaration against every species of reform;—a declaration, to which, in my conscience, I believe the noble duke owes nine-tenths of his present unpopularity. I wish I had not lived to see the day, when the brilliant and imperishable renown of his grace, as a general and a conqueror, was coupled with a deviation from his proper sphere into the labyrinth of politics, and an attempt to shine as a great statesman: I wish I had not lived to see the day, when forgetfulness of the people to the merits of the soldier, and forgetfulness of the soldier to his own sphere of greatness, showed to Europe and to the world, that he could not accompany his majesty on a journey into the heart of an attached and loyal population.’

It was now obvious that the duke’s administration, which no longer moved in harmony with the predominating spirit of the nation, had received a shock which would prevent its long duration. On Monday, the fifteenth of November, when the chancellor of the exchequer stated to the house his arrangements for the civil list, which, in consequence of a previous estimate, he proposed to raise to the annual sum of £970,000, sir Henry Parnell moved, ‘that a select committee be appointed to inquire into its various items, and to make their report.’ The debate was brief: Messrs. Calcraft and Herries, both members

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

Dissolution
of the Wel-
lington ad-
ministra-
tion.

of government, declared that it was an unusual thing to submit the civil list to a committee, and that retrenchment and simplification had been carried as far as was practicable or prudent: but the motion was supported by Mr. Bankes, lord Althorp, Mr. Wynne, and Mr. Holme Sumner; three of which number, in other times, would hardly have lent their votes to unseat a tory administration; and, on a division, ministers were defeated by a majority of 233, co-operating, though not expressly confederated, whigs and extreme tories, against a minority of 204. Next day the duke of Wellington in the upper, and sir Robert Peel in the lower house, announced that in consequence of the preceding decision, they had tendered to his majesty their resignations, and continued to hold office only until successors should be appointed: it was afterwards declared, that they came to this resolution, not so much on account of the late vote on the civil list, as from anticipation of the result of a division on Mr. Brougham's proposition for parliamentary reform; which stood for the very day on which this announcement was made: but even if the civil list question had not been deemed important enough to justify a resignation, the majority that decided it showed a settled and stern system of opposition, which must have convinced ministers that their reign was over. Mr. Brougham, at the request of his associates, postponed his motion for reform till the twenty-fifth of November, professing to do so with great reluctance; since he appeared to reckon on remaining in his present position, and expressly affirmed, that 'he could not possibly be affected by any change in administration:' accordingly, he pledged himself to bring forward his motion on the day appointed, 'whoever might be his majesty's ministers:' next day, he repeated this declaration, on a motion made by sir M. W. Ridley, to postpone the consideration of election petitions till after Christmas; expressing astonishment at the reasons assigned for it—that ministers would not be present. 'The house,' he observed, 'could do many things without their assist-

ance; and with every feeling of respect for the future ministers, generally speaking, he could have nothing to do with their administration.' The motion was negatived; and two days afterwards, Mr. Brougham was gazetted as lord high chancellor of Great Britain, with a peerage.

CHAP.
LXVII.
— 1830.

The high tories, though they had lent their votes to displace the ministry, had formed no plan, and taken no steps, to ensure to themselves any share in the succession; accordingly, earl Grey, being appointed first lord of the treasury, was commissioned to fill up the ranks of government; which duty he undertook, on the express permission of his majesty, that parliamentary reform should be brought forward as a cabinet measure. In the course of a week, the new ministry was established; not consisting solely of whigs, but containing an admixture of those who had been adherents of Messrs. Canning and Huskisson, and who had formerly held office with the leading members of the displaced administration: the only difficulty lay with Mr. Brougham, who had so recently declared that no change could possibly affect him; by which he evidently meant, no change that did not offer to his acceptance a station sufficiently high: the minister was afraid to leave him neglected or discontented in the lower house, and the honorable gentleman was resolved not to sacrifice his interest there for any subordinate office; so that at length the highest judicial dignity in the empire was wrested out of the premier's hands by a skilful politician, of splendid talents indeed, but notoriously deficient in those particular qualifications which his official duties required. Few were found to pity the fate of the renegade sir James Scarlett, neglected now by the party whom he had so lately deserted; though many thought, the Irish chancellor, sir Antony Hart, who had stood impartially between contending parties, harshly treated in being made to resign for lord Plunkett: the premier, however, considered it necessary to have an Irish chancellor whom he could fully trust and employ in Irish politics. The duke of Richmond,

Formation
of earl
Grey's ad-
ministra-
tion.

CHAP.
LXVII.
1830.

the only leading member of the old tory party who entered the new cabinet, became postmaster-general: to lord Althorp it was assigned to lead the house of commons as chancellor of the exchequer; while the offices of home, foreign, and colonial secretaries, were given respectively to lords Melbourne, Palmerston, and Goderich: sir James Graham was made first lord of the admiralty; lord Lansdowne, president of the council; and lord Durham, privy seal; Messrs. Denman and Horne, attorney and solicitor-general; lord Hill, commander-in-chief; lord Auckland, president of the board of trade, and Mr. C. Grant, of the board of control: lord Holland became chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; the duke of Devonshire, lord chamberlain; and the honorable Agar Ellis, chief commissioner of woods and forests: Mr. R. Grant was made judge advocate; lord John Russell, paymaster of the forces; Mr. Poulett Thompson, vice-president of the board of trade, and treasurer of the navy; sir Edward Paget and sir Robert Spencer, master and surveyor-general of the ordnance; Mr. C. W. Wynne, secretary at war; while Mr. Edward Ellice and Mr. Spring Rice were appointed joint secretaries of the treasury: lord Carlisle had a seat in the cabinet without office. The only offices in Scotland liable to change, being those of the lord advocate and solicitor-general, were given, the first to Mr. Jeffery, the latter to Mr. Cockburn; long-tried friends and literary coadjutors of the new lord chancellor. Ireland received, as its chief governor, the marquis of Anglesea; with Mr. Stanley, as secretary; lord Plunkett, chancellor; and Mr. Pennefather, attorney-general.

The elevation of this ministry, the expectations it excited, as well as the peculiar difficulties and dangers by which it was threatened, were so well stated, at the time, by one of our leading journals,² that no apology can be requisite for introducing a few of its remarks into these pages. 'The exigency to which the new ministry owe their admission to power,' says the writer, 'is not one produced by court intrigue, or by mere

² The Times of 22nd of November, 1830.

party triumph: it is founded on that opinion, which caused the overthrow of a government hostile to reform; not zealous enough for retrenchment; and supposed to be, though perhaps unjustly, not quite impartial between the interests of freedom and prerogative, in the concerns of foreign nations. As by the tide of opinion, then, they floated into office, on it they must continue to buoy themselves, or they will inevitably perish.'—'The composition of the Grey ministry is possibly as good as the present state of parties will admit of; confining the selection to public men who are likely to agree on most political questions, and especially on the enforcement of those great principles, which constitute the rallying points for all reflecting and disinterested minds, in the actual crisis of the world.'—'Wants which have more than once betrayed themselves among men of considerable ability as public speakers, may, we hope, not be chargeable on the infant government; we mean those of sagacity in council, promptitude in action, with steadiness and diligence in the conduct of daily, though subordinate, matters of administration. It is perhaps on the last of these points, even if apparently least momentous, that the most serious apprehensions might with some reason be entertained. The tories have, for almost half a century, filled all offices under government; so that among many monopolies, from which the public interests have suffered, by no means the least injurious has been a monopoly of official experience, tact, and readiness, by a single party in the state, to the exclusion of a fair share to any and every other: nor is the operation of such a circumstance on the course of public business, under a whig administration, confined to the mere slowness or imperfection with which the machine of state, through the inexperience of its conductors, moves on: besides inexperience in the whig who supersedes the tory subaltern, there may be, from many years of close connexion with tory patrons, something not far short of treachery in the tory underling, who, from generosity or indifference, is left in place, and trusted, when he ought in prudence to be super-

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

seded.' After describing other members of the cabinet, the journalist thus proceeds:—' We may just observe, that lord Grey and lord Brougham are both known to the country more as opposition leaders than as practical statesmen; but that they both come into power, pledged in the most solemn manner to their sovereign and the country, as advocates of unflinching retrenchment, and principles of reform adopted without reference to their operation on political friend or foe. The new lord chancellor stands more peculiarly bound before the world, not only to promote parliamentary reform, but to execute, on a broad and mighty scale, a plan of reform in the jurisprudence of the empire. But the first and last object of solicitude with the new ministry must be, that they accede to office by capitulation with the people—they must redress our grievances, or be for ever ruined.'

As it was necessary that the new ministers, who had vacated their seats by accepting office, should be re-elected, an opportunity was taken by the radical party of showing their strength, and an example of the great danger of universal suffrage was exhibited: in a contest at Preston, where the elective franchise is co-extensive with the occupancy of houses, the honorable Mr. Stanley, a statesman of distinguished abilities, heir of the house of Derby, and representative of what was denominated moderate reform, met with a mortifying but complete defeat by the notorious Henry Hunt, the great leader of English democrats. During the remainder of this year, no parliamentary business of importance was transacted, except the passing of a regency bill, which had been recommended in the king's speech, and had been introduced into the house of lords on the day when the fate of the late cabinet was sealed in the commons: it provided, in case of his majesty's decease, that if there should be a posthumous child, the queen should be guardian and regent during the minority; if no such event should occur, the duchess of Kent was to be guardian and regent during the minority of her daughter, the princess Victoria, who was not to marry during that minority without the

consent of the king; or, if he died, without the consent of both houses of parliament; and the regency of her mother was to cease, if she, while regent, should marry a foreigner. A select committee was appointed, on the ninth of December, to inquire into the reductions that might be effected in the salaries and emoluments of offices held during the pleasure of the crown by members of either house, and to report their opinion. On the twenty-third, both houses adjourned to the third of February; for ministers required the intervening period to prepare measures which they might submit to parliament; more especially, that plan of reform, to which they had pledged themselves on accepting office, and by which alone they could hope to retain it.

Among the most interesting events of the present year, may be reckoned the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester railway, though attended by the lamentable death of Mr. Huskisson; who, as one of the members for Liverpool, accompanied the duke of Wellington in the procession: neglecting the caution repeatedly given to visitors against leaving the carriages, this unfortunate gentleman was knocked down by one of the returning engines; when his leg was so dreadfully crushed, that amputation could not be performed; and he died of that disorder which is called tetanus, so commonly occurring after extensive lacerated wounds. The great work, on which so melancholy an accident took place, was at this time the most important undertaking of the kind completed: its cost, including the expenses of a carrying establishment, is said to have exceeded £1,200,000; and the distance, about thirty miles, is performed in a period of time, varying from one hour twenty-five minutes, to one hour forty minutes, including a stoppage of some minutes at the half-way station. Here the employment of locomotive engines, at high-pressure velocities, was first introduced; and in that, as well as other costly experiments, great expenses were incurred, from which subsequent undertakings will be exempt: the accommodation which it has afforded to Liverpool and Manchester can hardly be overrated: as an evidence of

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

Death of
Mr. Hus-
kisson.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

this, it may be sufficient to state the fact, that the number of passengers between those towns was trebled in the first year, and long went on increasing; so that, notwithstanding the heavy outlay in its formation, and its current expenditure, the enterprise has been very profitable to the proprietors, paying them a dividend of ten per cent. on their capital. Though it possesses peculiar local advantages, it may be said to have been the grand stimulus to that extension of a scheme, which threatens to overspread our land with railways: so many new projects and new routes have come before the public, that we are at present perplexed to obtain an intelligible idea of the complex whole; and the result, when the great lines of intercourse shall be completed, and the velocity of movement carried to its height, seems beyond the power of anticipation: this, however, may be said; that the magnitude of the sums risked in this class of speculation indicates a degree of private wealth and enterprise, such as no time or country but our own has ever produced. Many persons affect to feel alarm at this: but it should be recollected, that so much money must be drawn from other investments or from hoarded stores; while the disbursement of these vast sums will be spread over a series of years, and the accumulating power of capital is fully equal to it: of late, indeed, the great difficulty has been to find investment for capital; and the returns for it, whether in lands, or houses, or manufactures, have greatly fallen: the effect of this new demand, if proper caution be used, will be to relieve the capitalist, and give a stimulus to the country—a wholesome stimulus too; because the expenditure is totally distinct from that of war.

In this, as in most other cases of projected improvement, our government and legislature neither took the initiative, nor acted afterwards as propriety and justice required. For their neglect in the first instance, and their aversion to legislate in the French fashion,³ which

³ The French system is radically bad, in that it only undertakes direct lines, or *grandes routes*, neglecting all districts which present no temptation by a prospect of large returns.

would have almost destroyed railway enterprise in the bud, they may fairly be excused: but all persons concerned, both speculators and the public, have reason to complain, that they did not guide and direct operations at first, surveying and selecting main lines, such as ought to be made, instead of leaving that selection, in numberless instances, to ignorance, folly, and knavery. Had government issued a commission, aided by scientific persons, to recommend lines, and to discourage excessive speculation by encouraging what was legitimate, many fallacious schemes, great expenditure of capital among the vultures of the law, and ruinous sacrifices in the purchase of land to buy off opposition among the *honorable* members of both houses,⁴ might have been prevented! much also of that capital which rival competitors have locked up in the shape of deposits, to the injury of our commercial interests, might have been rescued from its confinement: and how many lives and limbs of her majesty's subjects might have been preserved, had proper officers been appointed, not merely to sanction the opening of a railway for traffic, but to exercise some sort of superintendence over the company which worked it! or if a code of laws, which such a gigantic movement in society demands, had been established for the reward of good conduct, and for the punishment at least, if not the prevention of evil!⁵

And when government did at length come forward, its injustice in many points, but more especially in seeking to interfere with the dividends, as well as with the property of companies, raised such a clamor as quickly drove it from the scene, until the anarchy and confusion caused by its own neglect, recalled it to a renewal of its exertions. And what ensued? Con-

⁴ The cases of this kind on the lines of the Eastern and North-Eastern Companies are too notorious to require public indignation being drawn to them by a more direct allusion: nothing in the annals of chicanery ever equalled them.

⁵ No adequate punishments are annexed to the most flagrant attempts to destroy life by wholesale on her majesty's new highways: the most serious offences, falling short of manslaughter, are visited merely by a small fine at the discretion of a magistrate, or by a term of imprisonment shorter than that awarded to a vagrant: as to the servants of companies, a dismissal from their service, seems generally to expiate offences.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

fessedly a very judicious measure; and far too good to be endured by its originators. A preliminary jurisdiction was given to a department of the board of trade, composed of some of its most intelligent members, with lord Dalhousie at its head, assisted by a secretary second to no man in England for his statistical knowledge;⁶ and this admirable committee was as indefatigable in its investigations, as it was judicious in its recommendations. But how were their exertions received? The minister, in a manner totally unworthy of himself and his high character, directly counteracted the effects of his own measure, declaring in the house of commons that the opinions of this tribunal ought to be utterly disregarded; and that parliament itself should decide upon every new scheme. Hence parliamentary decisions, as well as those of preliminary committees, swayed by interest, caprice, and folly, became a perfect lottery—the avarice and hopes of competing speculators were excited to the utmost, a multitude of unfledged companies put in claims for every supposed prize, schemes unworthy of proposal became adopted, whilst others of the highest importance, and facility of construction, were rejected: a pedantic and absurd strictness in preliminary forms was often allowed to throw out the best recommended enterprize, and substitute a ruinous one in its place; until proportionally as legitimate speculation was discouraged its opposite became augmented, and the result has forced government to limit the amount of capital to be expended. And what is the probable consequence of this?—Why that a vast mass of capital, which when circulated in England, quickens the pulse of national industry and supplies good to millions of a destitute and despairing population, may be diverted into foreign channels. Let us hope therefore, that in future legislation regarding this important subject, heavy blows and wanton discouragement may not be aimed at it. In critical times which involve the transition of large interests, it is not easy to esti-

⁶ Mr. Laing, who obtained the prize of 100 guineas given by the Atlas newspaper for the best essay on ameliorating the condition of the lower classes.

CHAP.
LXVII.
—
1830.

mate accurately the influence of this new element; much less to replace it if lost, or to remedy errors committed against it: for though like the old war system, it gives a strong stimulus to production and consumption, yet it does not, like that system, anticipate resources, to expend them unproductively; and if railway speculation be well directed and protected, there is no reason why exhaustion and depression should follow in its track. Let government then treat it, as it never yet has treated it, like a great national question; more especially as our colonies and dependencies are beginning to demand attention. The French system need by no means be adopted, though a few leaves out of its book might be advantageously taken; nor is there any necessity for discouraging private enterprize, one great source of British grandeur, provided it be established on a firm basis, regulated by just principles, and protected against that insane spirit of competition which has led to so much distress and ruin: for, let it not be supposed that *competition* in railways will be an unmixed benefit: on the contrary a well regulated monopoly would be much better able to accommodate the public, and reduce fares, than a ruinous competition, ending in a coalition, which would eventually make the public pay for its losses: the unreasonable views and demands too of that most tyrannical of all monsters, the public, which is ever crying out like the horse-leech, 'give, give,' ought to be repressed: in short, a wise and prudent government would endeavor to legislate equitably for all interests, whilst it promotes a system which is daily sending a fertilizing stream of wealth through the nation, to exercise the brawny sinews of its million arms.

But there are still higher views to be taken of these gigantic schemes: they should be considered in their moral and ultimate effects, as the benevolent designs of Providence to ameliorate the human race. The greater the communication between nations, the more do national antipathies and asperities wear off: as men come to know each other better, the more do they

CHAP.
LXVII.
1830.

consider each other as branches of one stock, as members of a common family, to be loved as brethren: and when they have attained to this character of love, how certainly must the horrors of war give way to the arts of peace! Even let it be supposed that any particular nation should desire to involve others in those miseries which in this history we have so frequently depicted and deplored; how would it long be able to resist a coalition of the myriads which within a month might be collected on its frontier?

But the prospect of the christian philanthropist may be extended still farther: for when the east and the west, when India and Africa, shall obtain, as assuredly they will obtain, their vast lines of internal communication, what an opening will be made for that best of all peace-makers, the Gospel of our blessed Saviour! It is hardly too much to say that a full development of the grand powers of steam and iron, preparing in the desert a highway for God's missionaries, will tend to the fulfilment of those glorious prophecies, which declare—that the sword shall be beaten into the ploughshare—that the lion and the lamb shall lie down together—and that nation shall rise up against nation no more. And how much is this conviction strengthened, when in connexion with the materials of change we reflect upon the change of agents! One of the most remarkable features of our age is the stupendous grandeur of commercial enterprize, and the direct action of whole nations, as contrasted with the isolated efforts of individual energy: we no longer see kings, emperors, and conquerors standing out in prominent relief; but merchant princes, and flourishing communities occupying their places: what in former ages was done by the great, now is done by the many; and communities have a larger and more enduring influence than courts. As usual, Great Britain takes the lead in those enterprizes which seem destined by Providence to change the face of the globe: and if her influence now be great, what will it become, when steam, completing its triumph, and sweeping away all local boundaries, shall of England, Scotland, and Ireland, make one vast

CHAP.
LXVII.
1830.

metropolis? When to the freedom and extent of an empire, shall be united the compactness of a city, and the security of a fortress? To this consummation she is fast approaching; and during her progress to it, the face of the country and condition of its inhabitants must undergo much change: but let the alarmist quiet himself by reflecting that every thing connected with humanity is doomed to change; and the changes which have already occurred are but preparatory to still greater: whatever may be thought of the minor accidents of life, no christian can fail to see the finger of God visible in those great events which affect the destiny of nations: at the same time let it never be forgotten, that change here may be intended, and certainly ought, to prepare us for a greater change hereafter; that through the vicissitudes of human life we are all hastening towards a country where no ulterior change can take place; but where our lot, regulated by our conduct here, will be fixed throughout eternity.

At the close of this year a special commission was sent for the trial of persons guilty of riotous and incendiary practices in the southern counties; when numbers were convicted of destroying machinery, firing barns and stacks, and forcibly entering houses for robbery or other unlawful purposes. Many were convicted, and a few were executed: but more experienced the lenity of government, which, however commendable, failed of its purpose; for within a short time similar outrages occurred with equal, if not greater, malignity. This crime of incendiarism, then new, though now unhappily so common in England, indicates great demoralization in a peasantry once distinguished by industry, subordination, and good morals.

Among the affairs of foreign states, it only remains to notice, that the spirit of popular insurrection, stimulated by success in France, appeared at Leipsic, Dresden, Hesse Cassel, Hamburg, Berne, Basle, and Poland: in this latter country, however, it sprung not from civil discord, or political machinations; but rather from the harsh and insulting proceedings of its viceroy, the grand duke Constantine, whose savage

State of
foreign
nations.

CHAP.
LXVII.
1830.

character had excluded him from popularity wherever his power had been felt. A contest took place in the streets of Warsaw, whence the Russian troops were expelled; and the archduke was eventually obliged to retire from the frontier; not however until it had been represented to him, that it was the universal wish of the nation, that the constitution should be carried into complete execution; that the promise of Alexander should be fulfilled, of incorporating with Poland its ancient provinces, now under the dominion of Russia; but that no demands pointed to the dethronement of the emperor as their king, in whose name had been effected all the changes lately made in the government: doubtful, however, in what light Nicholas I. would regard these proceedings, the Poles prepared themselves for resistance, if he should determine to treat them as rebels: general Klopicki was named commander in chief, and soon found himself at the head of a regular and respectable army: divided, however, and mutilated as Poland was, it seemed a hopeless prospect for a portion of it to engage unassisted in a struggle with the gigantic power of Russia; while to this was added the apprehension, (too soon, alas! to be realised) lest Austria and Prussia, in fear for their plunder, should be adverse to its cause: the Poles, however, made themselves ready for the contest with stout hearts; and to secure energy and promptitude in their measures, invested Klopicki with dictatorial power: but even in assuming this office, which was to last only until the chambers could be convened, the general disclaimed any intention, on the part of his country, to throw off its king, or to demand any thing more than an independent national existence under him, together with that free constitution which had once been promised. Of what avail, however, were promises with Nicholas and his Russian nobles, who now viewed unhappy Poland with eyes of conquest and spoliation, like those with which English monarchs and their favorites once were accustomed to regard Ireland? Two commissioners were sent to St. Petersburg, to attempt some terms of compromise;

out the autocrat would not listen to their representations, and issued his proclamation, threatening the unhappy Poles with severe punishment for conduct, which he described as 'horrid treason.' The result is too well known; and while the apathy of our own government and that of France is little to be commended, who can sufficiently execrate the imperial and royal kites, who watched over the skeleton of Poland, while the eagle picked its bones?

Before the revolution of July, the French government had sent a powerful fleet and army to Algiers; when the dey, having capitulated to the notorious general Bourmont, retired to Naples, and left the head of the piratical states in the hands of its conquerors. One of the chief motives for this expedition was to obtain the glory of a military exploit which had baffled the greatest nations of Europe, and thus open an avenue to popularity for the bigoted and despotic government of Charles X. 'Allah! Allah! God is great, and the avenger of injustice!' exclaimed the expatriated dey in his southern asylum, when he heard of the northern flight subsequently taken by the French monarch. In Spain, 'the beloved Ferdinand' deeply offended the Carlists by his abolition of the Salique law, in favor of the child, if it should be a female, with which his queen was pregnant; and thus gave rise to a war, which long desolated the northern provinces of Spain, as well as to the quadripartite treaty, under which it was hoped that harassed country might enjoy the blessings of a constitutional government. In Portugal, Don Miguel, still cut off from direct communication with all European sovereigns, except his worthy brother of Spain, continued, by means of special commissions, to take vengeance on those of his subjects suspected of political delinquencies, and to supply his wants by the confiscation of their property: blood indeed had ceased to flow; but a more terrible and lingering destruction was ensured to his victims, by their deportation to servitude in the African settlements: at the beginning of this year, about fifty persons, whose only offence was, that they

CHAP.
LXVII.

1830.

were suspected of being malcontents, were shipped off for Angola: though of good families and respectable character, they were chained up with the most abandoned ruffians, robbers, and assassins, doomed to this punishment for their crimes: to revive the horrors of a slave-ship in the middle passage, they were stowed away in the smallest space possible, within a vessel heavily laden with colonial stores; and while the best accommodation was reserved for malefactors, the more pestilential and deadly berths were left to magistrates, members of the Cortes, and other reputable persons, victims of their own loyalty or of their vile master's suspicions: out of respect for their former station, and pity for their present sufferings, these men had been for some time spared the fatigues of hard labor; but the superintendent soon received orders to discontinue that misplaced lenity.⁷ The political prisoners in the dungeons at Lisbon were scarcely less fortunate: trials they could not obtain; nor could any, even when known to be innocent, procure their liberty: those who were confined in the castle of St. Julian, underwent such cruelties from the infamous Telles Jordao, that hundreds were driven to insanity; and the rest procured a petition to be sent in their behalf to Miguel: but their complaints were poured into ears deaf to mercy; not even the death of his mother, who had been justly blamed for much of this cruelty, made any change in the tiger's disposition which she had imparted to her son: yet this was the monster, whom the duke of Wellington's administration was anxious to treat as a sovereign; and for him, its adherents, when out of office, were continually taunting earl Grey, because that nobleman disdained to contaminate the fair fame of Britain by an alliance with such infamy. At length, with little regard to his own interests, he began to turn his arms against his benefactors; when part of the Portuguese navy was employed in an inefficient attempt to blockade Terceira, where the regency, in the name of the young queen, was still ruling; but Miguel made this a pretext for seizing

⁷ See Annual Register for 1830, p. 295, &c.

some English vessels and imprisoning some British residents at Lisbon, without any charge against them: though deaf to all remonstrances from our consul, he did not long hesitate, when a threat to employ force reached him, to restore the pretended prizes, give compensation to all parties who had been wronged, and make public acknowledgement of his offences in the royal gazette.

In the early part of this year, the regal sovereignty of Greece, which had been declined by prince John of Saxony, was formally offered by the protecting powers to prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg: but though he had once been extremely anxious for this prize, he had lately been worked on by the representations of the crafty Capo d'Istria; while he saw in the illness of George IV., which was likely to terminate fatally, new prospects opening to his ambition: the question therefore regarding the narrow, inconvenient boundaries of this new kingdom, and the separation of Candia from its territory, formed a ready pretext for his rejection of the offer; nor did the public voice disapprove his repugnance to become the ruler of a discontented people, under the auspices of a foreign league. In Belgium, where this favorite of fortune finally obtained a crown, the progress of military events was interrupted by foreign interference, but not before the insurgents had made themselves masters of Antwerp; general Chassé having withdrawn his troops into the citadel, and established a convention, by which he was to remain there unmolested, on condition of his not firing into the town, while the insurgent army retired from its neighborhood. The united Netherlands had been formed into one kingdom by Great Britain, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and France; which powers held themselves intitled to look after their own work: some of them would willingly have interfered, for the purpose of compelling the Belgians to submit by force: the Rhenish provinces of Prussia were directly exposed to the infection of that spirit which had severed the united kingdom; the Germanic confederation was already attacked by

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

formal claims on Luxemburg; and the king of the Netherlands had appealed to the allied powers to preserve that throne which they themselves had set up: on the other hand, it was certain that the new government of France would favor the independence of Belgium; and its people would desire nothing more ardently than a pretext for war, which might terminate in the restoration of these provinces to their dominion. One party in Belgium openly declared, that 'her interests demanded a reunion with France; and there was no doubt that she would receive the protection of that power, in case any of the allies should employ force to renew her connexion with Holland:' armed interference, therefore, was out of the question, since all deprecated the chance of another general war; nevertheless, all agreed to interpose their good offices; and as their first object was to stop hostilities, a protocol, signed at London on the fourth of November, signified that these must cease on both sides. This document further declared, that new arrangements were necessary; though not such as would affect the rights of which the king of the Netherlands and the Germanic confederation exercised over the grand duchy of Luxemburg. The plenipotentiaries of the five great powers also decided that the navigation of the Scheldt should be free from the twentieth of January; a measure which England had frequently taken up arms to prevent; and at this time the French minister for foreign affairs, in his place in the chamber, declared that the free navigation of rivers was a principle which France had proclaimed, and which she would cause to be respected. So much more liberal and enlightened were nations now becoming! A series of negotiations, however, commenced, involving as many difficulties, and counteracted by as many conflicting interests, as any piece of diplomatic agency in the history of European politics.

State of the
public mind
respecting
reform.

While this was the aspect of foreign affairs, our own domestic concerns were far removed from a state of tranquillity. In the sister kingdom a constant agitation of the anti-union question kept up the feverish

anxiety of that irritable nation; whilst in England unsettled feelings, especially among the peasantry, still showed themselves in mischievous and lamentable excesses. Many counties were kept in continual disturbance by the commission of midnight crimes; while incendiarism increased to such a pitch, that the militia were embodied, special commissions were issued for delivering the crowded gaols, and a form of prayer was drawn up by the heads of the church for the restoration of domestic peace and happiness.

In the mean time the members of administration, supported by numberless petitions, were occupied in framing that new parliamentary constitution, which was expected to be a *panacea* for all disorders in the state; and perhaps there never was a period when domestic and foreign affairs formed a stronger combination in favor of any public measure: every thing indeed for a very long time had been gradually tending to such a consummation; and it had long been seen, that reform must follow the progress of intelligence, as light follows the rising of the sun: the old system, when fully exposed and understood, necessarily disgusted every liberal and informed mind; and this system, by the late war, and the expenditure consequent on it, had been carried to its highest pitch. The debt of Great Britain, the weight of taxation, the distress produced by agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial failures, the alteration of our currency, and the actual misery of a starving population;—these causes, together with the example of France, acting on minds prepared for change, set the whole kingdom in a ferment; and not only the correction of acknowledged abuses, but immediate relief from every national calamity, was confidently expected by the multitude, in a reform of parliament. However men might differ as to the means by which this object was to be attained, the demand itself signified, in the mouths of all, that the power and efficacy of the democratical part of the constitution should be increased: therefore, if the British constitution was to be preserved, the answer to the question, whether reform should be granted,

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

depended on the degree to which the control of the great body of the people, acting by the house of commons over the measures of government, should be augmented; and this was a question to be decided by sound reason; not by the mere fact that certain bodies of men desired political power. The petitions now industriously manufactured throughout the country were, as might have been expected, generally deficient regarding this, the only intelligible question that could arise; yet they fully answered the purpose of ministers, by announcing the general proposition, that change was necessary.

But beside the usual machinery of petitions, political unions had already been extensively formed, for the purpose of organising large numbers of individuals into one body, which might act on the public mind around them, and press their opinions on the government, in a spirit of dictation, though under the pretence of support.

Introduc-
tion of
reform bill.

In this state of affairs parliament met, pursuant to adjournment, on the third of February, when earl Grey stated, that, although it had been a work of considerable difficulty, ministers had at last succeeded in framing a proposition which would be effective, without exceeding the bounds of a just and well-advised moderation: it had been unanimously sanctioned by government, and would be introduced into the house of commons at as early a period as possible. Accordingly, on the first of March, this great measure was brought forward by lord John Russell, to whom, though not a cabinet minister, it was entrusted, in consideration of his constant and strenuous exertions in the cause of parliamentary reform. After a very elaborate speech, which his lordship commenced by declaring that ministers wished to take their stand between hostile parties, though he laid it down as a principle that the question of right was in favor of the reformers,—since the ancient constitution of the country declared, that no man should be taxed for the support of the state, who had not consented by himself or his representative to

the imposition of the taxes,—he proceeded to detail the plan by which ministers proposed to satisfy a demand for reform, which, as they themselves believed, could be no longer resisted. That plan had been so framed as to remove all reasonable complaints of the people; which complaints were principally directed, first, against nomination by individuals; secondly, against elections by corporations; and, thirdly, against electioneering expenses. With regard to the first two grounds of complaint, the ministerial plan consisted, first, of disfranchisement, in whole or in part, of places which had hitherto sent members to parliament; secondly, of enfranchisement, in order to enable places, which had been hitherto unrepresented, to elect members; thirdly, of an extension of the franchise, in order to increase the number of electors in those places which were to be allowed to retain, in whole or in part, their existing privileges: all voters were to be duly registered; and in order to diminish the expenses of elections, as well as opportunities for bribery, drunkenness, and corruption, the duration of the poll was to be diminished; and that for counties to be taken simultaneously at different places. His lordship, having thus drawn a general outline of the bill, entered into the changes that were to be made in the representation of Scotland and Ireland: the general result of the measure, he said, would be to create a new constituency of about half a million; for the increase in counties would be about 100,000, that in towns already represented about 110,000, in new boroughs 50,000, in London 95,000, in Scotland 60,000, and in Ireland perhaps 40,000: on this numerous body, connected with property, and possessing a valuable stake in the country, it would depend, if any future struggle should arise, to support parliament and the throne, in carrying that struggle to a successful termination: the probability of possessing this franchise would be an inducement to good conduct; for when a man found, that by being rated at a certain rent, and by paying rates, he became intitled to vote in the election of

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

members of that house, he would feel an inducement to be careful, frugal, and punctual in his dealings; to preserve a character among his neighbors, and the place which he might hold in society; so that this large increase of the constituency would provide for political and moral improvement among the people. The necessary results of the arrangements he had detailed, was to diminish the number of members by sixty-two; but it was thought that this diminution would enable the house to transact the public business more conveniently and effectually. After accounting satisfactorily for two omissions which might possibly be brought as charges against him,—that no provision was made for shortening the duration of parliaments, or for introducing the vote by ballot,—his lordship concluded by requesting leave to bring in his bill. This motion brought on a debate, which lasted seven nights, and elicited opinions from more than seventy speakers; but in the end, leave was granted to the noble mover of the bill to introduce it into the house; which was accordingly done on the fourteenth of March. It was not certainly known, why the opponents of this measure allowed so keen and lengthened a contest to terminate without a division: ministers afterwards admitted, that, if it had taken place, they expected to have been left in a minority; but the opposition did not at that time form a combined body, with any regular plan of operations, under the guidance of any able leader.

From the moment when the general outlines of the plan had been discussed in parliament, what an excitement was created! what a struggle was determined on! the peer trembling for his boroughs, the aspiring protégé for his interest, the diplomatist for his office, the ecclesiastic for his church revenues, the constitutionalist for the monarchy itself. These were not aware what changes may be effected in England without endangering the character and safety of its institutions: they had mistrusted the good sense and good feeling of the people; had long opposed popular opinion; and had deferred every equitable compromise

until it was too late to propose or accept it with grace: and although few of those changes were proposed, for which violent reformers had been most clamorous; yet such persons immediately altered their tone, and professed to receive the bill with joy: it gave them, indeed, less than they desired, but it promised more than they had expected; and they were told by their leaders, whose hopes lay in the future, that as ministers had determined to go no farther, all would be lost, unless government were strenuously supported by those who thought a change desirable: hence their determination to forget what they considered its defects; to be silent regarding the ballot, universal suffrage, and annual parliaments; to enforce the scheme by every legal method; and to make 'the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill,' the watch-word of their party. On the twenty-first, the second reading was moved; when sir R. Vyvyan, one of the members for Cornwall, after insisting on the danger of introducing into our legislature a democratic influence, to which in no long time the other branches would be compelled to yield,—proposed, as an amendment, 'that the bill should be read that day six months:' on this motion the house divided; when there appeared for the amendment, 301; against it, 302; leaving lord John Russell a majority of only one in an assembly of more than 600 members: it was also well known, that this very majority contained many who had expressed a determination not to support all the provisions of the bill; and more still, who, being too timid to resist the principle of the measure, were equally resolved to modify it in committee, though their intention was not declared. When his lordship, therefore, on the eighteenth of April, moved the order of the day for a committee of the whole house, general Gascoyne, one of the members for Liverpool, endeavored to get rid of the bill by a motion for counteracting one of its essential clauses, respecting the diminution of the number of representatives: this produced a violent and contentious debate, which, being adjourned to the following day, concluded by leaving ministers in a minority of

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

Dissolu-
tion of
parliament.

eight. The chancellor of the exchequer had declared in his speech, that he knew the object of this amendment had a tendency to destroy the bill; and it was evident from the beginning that a majority of the present house could not be relied on by its supporters; but ministers did not seem at first determined to have recourse to a dissolution: at length, however, being harassed by the stanch reformers on one side, and on the other by intemperate speeches of anti-reformers in both houses, they resolved on this measure: the king went down to the house of lords; and, in the midst of one of the most turbulent scenes that ever occurred in that place, prorogued parliament to the tenth of May: next day it was dissolved, and a new parliament appointed to meet on the fourteenth of June. The whole empire was by this step thrown into a state of agitation and excitement: in many places, the dissolution was celebrated by illuminations; and in London, the unrestrained rabble vented their rage on the houses of individuals who had expressed sentiments unfavorable to the bill: among them, was that of Mr. Baring, the first of English merchants; and of the duke of Wellington, the chief of British warriors. This was followed by the most violently contested elections ever known in the British islands; and though the old borough system still remained unimpaired, wherever any election partaking of a popular character took place, the tories were discomfited: general Gascoyne was thrown out for Liverpool, sir R. Vyvyan for Cornwall, Mr. Banks for Dorsetshire; and in most places the popular cause was triumphant.

The important nature of the reform question, toward which so many other measures had a converging tendency, demands so large a space in these pages, that we must be content with alluding more cursorily to other matters connected with our later annals. On the eleventh of February, lord Althorp opened his budget by enumerating 210 places under government which it was proposed to reduce or abolish altogether; reductions attended with an economy of patronage rather than of public expenditure: he estimated the

charge for the year at £46,850,000; while the revenue, on account of the many taxes repealed, would yield only £47,150,000, and thus give an excess over the charge of only about £300,000; a very scanty allowance, which did not afford much room for the reduction of taxation: still he was of opinion that something might be done; especially by reducing those imposts which pressed on the industry of the country; by relieving trade from fiscal embarrassments; and by introducing in many cases a more equal distribution of taxes. A vehement opposition was made to many of his lordship's changes, more especially to a payment on transfers in the public funds; which he agreed to abandon, though a large party in the country, suffering under the effects of heavy taxation, were unable to see the justice of exempting funded property from the payment of a small sum, in return for the protection afforded to it: ministers were also defeated, on a division, in regard to a proposed diminution of duties on Baltic timber, and an augmentation of those on timber grown in Canada: among other items of the budget abandoned or modified, was a tax on steam-boat passengers, which being denounced from all sides of the house, was thrown overboard; and an increased duty on our colonial wines, which his lordship consented to reduce. When the arrangements of the civil list were considered, members of the late administration expressed great satisfaction, that the present ministers, so loud against profuse expenditure when out of office, and pledged to retrenchment if they came in, had been forced to acknowledge that they could not carry economy in this matter farther than it had been carried by their predecessors: the most material changes made, after the abolition of certain offices, were the reduction of the pension list in future to the sum of £75,000 per annum, and the subtraction of £460,000 from the civil list, to be placed under the control of parliament; but this system of retrenchment was far from satisfactory to Messrs. Hume, Hunt, and other members of that party. Another point, on which ministers had to encounter the opposition of old allies, and to receive

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

the support of former antagonists, was a proposal, which they found themselves bound in prudence to make for an increase of the army by 7680 men: no opposition, however, was offered to a resolution moved in consequence of a royal message, assigning to the queen, in case she should survive his majesty, £100,000 per annum, with Marlborough-house and Bushy-park, as town and country residences. Statements relating to the enormous expenditure on Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle were laid before parliament, when the excess above the estimates occasioned much indignation among many of its members; and the papers respecting this waste of public money were referred to a committee of inquiry.

Meeting
of new
parliament.

The new parliament met on the fourteenth of June; but a week having elapsed while members were sworn in and a speaker was elected, his majesty did not open the session in person till the twenty-first; when he read his speech with remarkable firmness, and returned to St. James's palace amid the enthusiastic greetings and acclamations of the people. After some warm altercation among the peers on a question of order, and in both houses respecting the conduct of ministers, as not acting with proper vigor to suppress riotous proceedings, the addresses were agreed to without any amendment being proposed. On the twenty-fourth, lord John Russell again brought forward, in the name of ministers, that measure of reform, which, in their opinion, was calculated to maintain unimpaired the prerogatives of the crown, with the rights and liberties of the people: after taking a retrospective view of what had occurred in the late parliament, and eulogising the spirit of patriotism manifested by the great body of electors throughout this kingdom in the choice of independent representatives, his lordship proceeded to observe, 'that with regard to the general features of the plan, he would not enter particularly into them, because they were substantially the same as those of the measure recently proposed; and as some slight alterations therein made, were improvements intended to carry its principles into effect, such details might be

New re-
form bill.

left till the bill went into committee.' Sir Robert Peel expressed at once his unaltered sentiments against the measure; but declined to discuss its merits till the second reading; which, at his suggestion, was postponed from the thirtieth of June, as originally intended, to the fourth of July: on that day, an animated debate took place, which was adjourned to the fifth; when the speech of Mr. Macauley, a young barrister, and nominee of lord Lansdowne for the borough of Calne, elicited much applause: its conclusion was as follows: 'the country and their children, for ages to come, would call this the second bill of rights—the greater charter of the liberties of England: he believed that the year 1831 was destined to exhibit to mankind the first example of a great, complicated, and deeply rooted system of abuses removed without violence, bloodshed, and rapine; all points fully debated, all forms observed, the fruits of industry not destroyed, and the authority of the law not suspended: these were things which might well make Englishmen proud of the age and country in which they lived: these were things which might make them look with confidence to the future destinies of the human race; which might make them look forward to a long series of tranquil and happy years, during which nothing would disturb the concord of a popular government and a loyal people; of years, in which if war should be inevitable, it would find the people a united nation; of years, pre-eminently distinguished, by the mitigation of public burdens, by the prosperity of industry, by the reformation of jurisprudence, and by all the victories of peace; in which, far more than in military triumphs, consisted the true prosperity of states, and the true glory of statesmen. It was with such feelings and hopes that he gave his cordial assent to this measure of reform, which in itself he considered desirable, and which, in the present temper of the public mind, appeared to him indispensably necessary to the repose of the empire, and the stability of government.'

The discussion this day was closed by sir George Murray, one of the late ministry, who also concluded

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

his speech with a prophecy, though totally opposite in character to that of the member for Calne. He said, 'this bill would have the effect of raising up another Cromwell, who was perhaps even then exulting in secret at the success of the present measure; and saying to himself at that moment, in the words of Oliver, his prototype—'the Lord hath delivered them into my hands:' the period for the appearance of this personage in the field had not yet arrived; he would not be there before the fifth act of the piece; and then, perhaps, he would be seen endeavoring to gather together the fragments of the constitution, which the noble lord's measure would have scattered and dispersed.' Another adjournment took place till the following day, when sir Robert Peel went over the whole ground of argument, historically and politically: he maintained, 'that our small boroughs were not a usurpation on the rights of the people; but that they had existed at an early period, and had continued ever since: although it might not be easy to defend the sale of these boroughs; yet it would be impossible to eradicate this evil, without depriving the nation of much good, which more than counterbalanced it. There had been no reform of parliament for more than 400 years; but so elastic were the principles which gave it force, in accommodating themselves to the spirit of the age and circumstances of the people, that the house had governed this country far better than any other country had ever been governed: feeling thus, he would give his opposition to the bill; which, in his opinion, went to diminish, not to increase, the security of our permanent liberty and happiness.' Lord J. Russell closed the debate with a defence of his plan, and at five o'clock in the morning a division took place; when the numbers were, for the second reading 367, and for the amendment 231, leaving a majority of 136 in favor of ministers.

On the twelfth, it was proposed that the house should go into a committee; when lord Maitland, one of the members for Appleby, rose to oppose the disfranchisement of that borough, on the score of a mistake in the

population returns; moving that counsel be heard against the bill, as far as regarded that point: ministers, however, declared, they would resist any such inquiry to the utmost; asking, whether the progress of this great measure was to be stopped for the examination of so insignificant a case; and whether a majority of the house would allow themselves to be so trifled with: the bill, it was said, was not one of pains and penalties; and members would be heard, in committee, concerning this or any other borough: after a stormy debate, the motion was negatived; when an adjournment was moved, and disposed of in a similar manner. The original motion, 'that the speaker do leave the chair,' being again put, an amendment was proposed, 'that the house do now adjourn:' this produced another violent altercation, the result of which placed ministers in a powerful majority: after five more distinct motions for an adjournment of the debate, all of which were defeated, the bill went into a committee; and the house broke up at half-past seven in the morning.

The measure was now discussed, clause by clause; subject, not only to the opposition of argumentative and high-minded statesmen, but to all the harassing vexations of party faction, from the twelfth of July to the fifteenth of September; when it was ordered to be engrossed: on the nineteenth, lord J. Russell moved its third reading; and there appeared, for the motion 113, against it 58: two days more, however, were occupied in debating the question, 'that the bill do pass;' in the course of which, several speakers exerted their oratorical powers, though much novelty of argument was not to be expected: among them, none was more animated than sir Charles Wetherell, who hoped that the house would take warning from France, where concessions had been followed only by destruction; and he concluded his speech, by expressing his conviction, that the bill, if carried, would subvert the throne, the church, and, ultimately, the liberties of the people: the numbers, on a division, were ayes 345, noes 236; leaving a majority of 109 for ministers. Next day,

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

Reform bill
passed by
the com-
mons.

CHAP.
I.XVII.

1831.

lord J. Russell, accompanied by many members, appeared at the bar of the upper house, and delivered the bill to the lord chancellor; when it was read a first time, *pro forma*, and ordered to be read a second time on the third of October. We must not forget to mention, that at this time lord Brougham's bill for reforming the court of bankruptcy was passing through the house of lords; a measure for which the British public is deeply indebted to that noble lord; its two chief principles, a commutation of the old lists of commissioners into fixed tribunals, and an appointment of official assignees, having wonderfully facilitated the dispatch of business and the recovery of dividends.

Opening of
new Lon-
don Bridge.

On Monday, the first of August, the ceremony of opening new London Bridge was honored by the presence of the king and queen, who partook of a splendid banquet, in a pavilion erected on this magnificent structure: on the day following, another exhibition of royalty took place, in a procession of their majesties to the house of lords, that the king might give his assent to the queen's dower bill: this document having been read by the clerk, his majesty gave it the royal assent with the customary formalities; when the queen rose, and made an obeisance thrice to the two houses then assembled; after which their majesties retired, accompanied by the various officers of their suite. After a short adjournment, on the same day, the house resumed its sitting; and, in consequence of a royal message, delivered by earl Grey, the importance of making a farther provision to support the honor and dignity of the princess Victoria, as presumptive heiress to the crown, was taken into consideration; when it appeared, that in consequence of prince Leopold's election to the Belgic throne, the allowance of £6000 per annum, which he had hitherto made to his sister and niece, had been withdrawn: lord Althorp, in the other house, gave the same account as a reason for an additional grant of £10,000 per annum to the income of the duchess, a large portion of which was to be expended in the maintenance and education of her daughter; and the resolution was agreed to. On the eleventh of

this month many of our West India islands suffered by a dreadful hurricane; but especially Barbadoes, where the government-house was unroofed, two churches were destroyed and all much injured; the custom-house was blown down; and the barracks buried forty soldiers in their ruins: the sugar-mills also were destroyed and the crops uprooted by the wind, while 3000 persons were killed and numerous families utterly ruined. An afflicting calamity also befel us nearer home, in the loss of the Rothsay Castle steamer, off the coast of Anglesea, when 180 persons miserably perished, chiefly through the misconduct of the captain and crew, and the neglect of the owners who had sent off their vessel unprovided with a boat.

The eighth of September was fixed for the coronation of William IV.; when this ceremony, shorn of the grotesque and inappropriate pageantry of chivalric times, was confined to the interior of the Abbey; and, as former coronations had been attended with great expense, no dinner took place in Westminster-hall on the present occasion. The royal procession moved in state carriages from St. James's palace, escorted by superb bodies of cavalry; and as soon as the king appeared, he was received with cheers from the multitude, such as greeted his father in the best of times: his majesty, the first naval king that ever sat on the British throne, was dressed in an admiral's uniform; and his august consort was in white, with brilliants in her head-dress: as the procession passed, the bands, stationed at different points, played our national anthem; and the enthusiasm of the people seemed carried to the highest pitch: in conformity with precedents, this coronation was distinguished by the grant of new honors, in the creation of three marquises, four earls, and fifteen barons; which increase of the peerage was soon afterwards succeeded by an addition of twenty-eight names to the list of baronets. On the twenty-second a grand naval spectacle was exhibited at Woolwich, in the launch of the Thunderer, a fine ship of eighty-four guns, built on sir R.

Coronation
of William
IV.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

Sepping's plan of a round stern, when her majesty performed the ceremony of naming the vessel.

As the time approached when the fate of parliamentary reform was to be decided in the upper house, the feelings of the public were wound up to the highest degree of excitement: numerous petitions were presented to the lords from counties, cities, corporations, religious societies, and individuals, praying, and in some cases even demanding, that they would pass the bill without mutilation. Previously to any regular discussion of the measure, occasional opportunities were taken by several of their lordships to deliver an opinion on the general question; and from these light skirmishes, it was soon seen that the great battle would be obstinately contested: at length, on Tuesday, the third of October, after the presentation of sixty-three petitions in favor of the bill by the lord chancellor, fifty-three by lord Radnor, eight by the marquis of Cleveland, and a large number of other peers, the order of the day was read; when earl Grey commenced a very elaborate and energetic oration, in which he gave a brief sketch of his own political life; declaring that he had been the constant and consistent advocate of parliamentary reform for nearly half a century; and that too, amid circumstances of much difficulty and danger, in seasons of great political convulsion and violence: his lordship was at first deeply affected, and for a few minutes was obliged, amid the sympathising cheers of the house, to resume his seat. After enforcing, by many arguments and apposite illustrations, the necessity of timely concession to the demands of the people, he turned in conclusion to the episcopal bench; and, addressing its occupants, said, 'that the eyes of the nation were on them:' he called on them, 'to set their house in order, and prepare to meet the coming storm; to consider seriously what would be the opinion of the country, should a measure, on which the nation had fixed its hope, be defeated by their influence.' As they were the ministers of peace, earnestly did he hope that the result of their

votes would be such as might tend to tranquillity and happiness: as regarded all their lordships, spiritual and temporal, he hoped the consequences of a rejection of this bill would be seriously considered; for those consequences would be serious. As to the effect which the rejection or adoption of this measure might produce to himself, or the administration of which he formed a part, it was a matter of insignificance: he would only say, that by this measure he was prepared to stand or fall: the question of his continuance in office for one hour, would depend on the prospect of being able to carry through, what he considered so important to the tranquillity, to the safety, and to the happiness of this country: he concluded with moving, 'that the bill be read a second time.' There can be no doubt that his lordship was deeply impressed with a conviction of the excellency of the measure which he so strenuously recommended, as well as of its necessity in the present state of affairs; but his best friends must regret his injudicious, not to say cruel appeal to the spiritual peers, at a period when the public mind was in so high a state of excitement.

Lord Wharncliffe next rose, and observed, 'that the measure, if completed, would draw into the house of commons all the power and privileges of the lords, and probably of the crown itself: the constitution could not go on with such a system as that which this bill would establish, taking away all checks on the ebullition of popular feeling, and supplying nothing in their place.' The noble baron, after dissecting the bill, and pointing out several inconsistencies, went on to show, that a house of commons, formed on such a basis, would become too much an image of the people; in which case, it would be impossible that three or four hundred titled persons should have the power of arresting any of its movements: the dangerous position, in which their lordships now stood, proved the truth of the assertion; they had a popular, or rather a delegated house of commons, which in consequence had passed this measure; and they were told, that they had nothing to do but to record and register the

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

decree: he concluded, by moving 'that the bill be rejected;' but on learning that this mode of proceeding implied disrespect toward the lower house, his lordship was permitted to withdraw his motion for another, 'that the second reading be postponed to that day six months.' An adjournment of the debate then took place till next day; when the principal speakers were,—for the bill, viscount Melbourne; and against it, lord Harrowby and the duke of Wellington: the latter, after adverting to the declaration against reform made by himself last session, and complaining of being misrepresented, declared that this bill went to violate both the principle and practice of the constitution: the town representation would be thrown by it into the hands of close self-elected committees; and by an undue enlargement of town constituencies, the balance of the agricultural representation of counties would be destroyed: the bill would create a fierce democratic constituency, and consequently a fierce and democratic body of representatives; so that under it the churches of England and Ireland would soon cease to exist. Next day, the adjourned debate was resumed; when the earl of Dudley said, 'that the measure, framed as it now was, proceeded on the monstrous supposition, that we had never had a good government, and that the people had always been deprived of their rights: the populace had been induced to support it, foolishly conceiving that it would extend commerce, make trade more brisk, give more general employment to the laboring classes, and make bread cheaper.' The marquis of Lansdowne admitted changes to be great evils, especially in so complicated a state of society as our own: but it would be found, from a careful perusal of the statute-book, that, in those important periods of our history, the reformation, the revolution, the succession of the house of Hanover, the union with Scotland, and that with Ireland, as well as the recent disfranchisement of Irish freeholders,—the laws, legalising those events, were but so many instances, in which the old institutions of the country were made to bend to a great political expediency.

The marquis of Londonderry characterised the measure as unjust, unconstitutional, and unprincipled; framed for the purpose of rendering whig supremacy perpetual. Viscount Goderich justly observed, 'this was no new question, having been agitated through a period of more than half a century; and though it might occasionally slumber, it could not become wholly dormant; since there was something in the constitution of human nature, which made it impossible for the subject ever to be extinguished.' Lord Plunkett stigmatised the assertion,—that this bill would become an instrument in the hands of the people, to destroy the church and other established institutions, as an outrageous libel on them: in the debate, however, next day, that assertion was strongly repeated by lords Wynford and Eldon; the latter of whom entered on a long train of legal argument, against the right of parliament to deprive boroughs and corporations of privileges, to which they were as much intitled as the members of that house were to their peerages. The lord chancellor next rose, and, in a speech of four hours' duration, went over all the arguments that had been brought against this measure in the course of the preceding debates; on some of which he animadverted with great severity, and in a style of sarcasm, which elicited peals of merriment at the expense of noble personages attacked: in conclusion, he requested them not to persuade themselves, that even if the present government were to be driven from office by the defeat of this bill, they would get rid of the great bugbear reform. 'No, my lords,' he said, 'the government succeeding us under such circumstances, would be one far less auspicious to your lordships than the present: you would be compelled to grant a measure of reform, compared with which, this we now proffer to you would be moderation: remember the often-quoted story of the Sibyl and her oracles, and learn from it the value of time taken by the forelock. You are the highest judicial authority in the realm; and it is the first duty of judges never to decide in any, even the most trifling cause, without

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

hearing every thing that can be given in evidence respecting it : do not then decide the great cause of a nation's hopes and fears without a hearing : beware of your decision ; rouse not the spirit of a peace-loving, but determined people ; alienate not the affections of a great empire from your body. As your friend, as the friend of my country, as the servant of my sovereign, I counsel you to assist us with all your efforts in preserving national peace, and perpetuating national prosperity : for all these reasons, I pray and beseech you not to reject this bill ; I call on you by all you hold most dear, by all that binds every one of us to our common order and our common country, unless you are prepared to say that you will admit of no reform, and are resolved against any change, I solemnly adjure you, yea, even on bended knees, my lords, (here the chancellor slightly bent his knee on the woolsack) I implore you, not to reject this bill.'

Lord Lyndhurst followed, and complained of the manner in which the opposition, of which he formed a part, had been treated, both in and out of that house, as supporters of old and obsolete prejudices, or even as men influenced by sordid and personal motives : but if they did err, they erred under very high authority ; the battle they were now fighting, the language they now held, the principles they were now advocating, had been fought, upheld, and advocated by the greatest statesmen and the most profound philosophers that had ever taken part in any discussion : passing, however, over the dead, he would come to the living ; and in vindication of the error committed by the opponents of this bill, if error it was, he would appeal to the authority of some of the noble lords who were now its supporters. Here his lordship mentioned earl Grey, as having, till the present occasion, always limited his views to a gradual reform ; he appealed also to the nominal author of the bill, lord J. Russell, as having hitherto professed the same moderate sentiments ; and, lastly, he quoted, to the same purpose, a letter written by the chancellor, when Mr. Brougham ; in which he stated, 'above all things,

that disfranchisement formed no part of his plan of reform.' This produced an interruption on the part of the lord chancellor, who said, that the letter referred to had been stolen from his private depository by one of his servants, who sold it to a newspaper; in consequence of which, an injunction from the court of chancery had been obtained, to prevent its circulation. Lord Lyndhurst, after this explanation, proceeded to state what would be the effects of the bill, if brought into operation: first, the destruction of the Irish protestant church; next, a general confiscation of ecclesiastical property in both nations; after which, the rights and privileges of their lordships would be trampled in the dust, together with the liberties of their country. The archbishop of Canterbury, in a speech of great moderation, justified the vote he intended to give against a measure, which he thought mischievous in its tendency, and dangerous to the fabric of our constitution. The duke of Sussex, on the contrary, thought it would add to our prosperity, and secure tranquillity, order, and peace in the empire. The duke of Gloucester was not averse to a safe constitutional plan, for the correction of such abuses as might have crept into the system: this, however, was not a measure of reform, but a new invention, which would lead to the destruction of our most valued institutions. After some observations from several other peers, earl Grey replied to the leading arguments urged against the bill; and finally declared, that 'he would not abandon the king, to whom he was bound by obligations of gratitude, greater perhaps than any subject ever owed to a sovereign, for the kind manner in which he had extended to him confidence and support; as well as for the indulgence with which he had accepted his offers and best endeavors to serve the throne: place was not sought by him; but it had been offered under such circumstances, that nothing but a sense of duty could have induced him to accept it: he had performed that duty to the utmost of his power, and would continue to do so; but if parliament and the nation should withdraw

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

Rejection
of the re-
form bill
by the
commons.

their confidence from him, and he could no longer be a useful servant to his majesty, he would resign office, and carry with him into retirement the consciousness of having done his best to serve his king and country.' The house at a quarter past six on Saturday morning, divided; and the amendment, 'that the bill be read that day six months,' was carried against ministers, by a majority of forty-one.

When the public became acquainted with this decision, the intelligence produced an extraordinary sensation, and meetings were instantly convened in the metropolis: one was held at the Thatched-house Tavern, consisting of all members who had supported the bill in its passage through the commons: with equal promptitude the common council assembled; and this was followed by a meeting, at the Mansion-house, of merchants and bankers; who passed resolutions, approving the conduct of government, and pledging themselves to its support: petitions also were carried to the king, praying him to continue his ministers, and have recourse to a new creation of peers, sufficient in numbers to carry the bill. On the ninth of October, lord Ebrington, in the commons, moved a resolution, declaratory of their unabated confidence in his majesty's ministers, and determination of adhering to the reform bill; and this, being carried by a majority of 131, secured the continuance of earl Grey's administration: the two houses were occupied for several nights in desultory discussions on the state of public feeling, and the disturbances thence proceeding; but, on the twentieth, parliament was prorogued by the king in person; who, on his return to the palace, was accompanied with enthusiastic cheering like that which he received on his way to the house.

Tumultu-
ous pro-
ceedings.

The rejection of the reform bill by the lords produced, as might have been expected, an ebullition of popular resentment throughout the kingdom: in London, the lord mayor and corporation went to St. James's with an address to the throne; and the civic procession was joined in its route by such numerous bodies with similar addresses, that before it reached

the palace, it consisted of more than 50,000 persons: soon after their arrival, the parochial deputies waited on lord Melbourne, who prudently advised them to commit their addresses to the county members, for presentation that day at the levee: this was done, and announced to the multitude by Mr. Hume, who exhorted them to be firm, united, and peaceable; but to disperse immediately, and give no advantage to the enemies of reform: this salutary advice, however, was thrown away on the crowd, who commenced an attack on the mansions of the marquis of Bristol and duke of Wellington, the windows of which they intirely demolished. Being driven thence by the police, they re-assembled at the house of earl Dudley, which owed its safety to the same excellent establishment: vast numbers had collected in the Park, evidently waiting for the departure of such peers as were known to be anti-reformers; and the marquis of Londonderry, being recognised, was received with volleys of stones, from which he suffered severely; but the duke of Cumberland was even dragged from his horse, and would probably have been sacrificed, if he had not been rescued by the police.

In the country, violence and outrage were at first confined to the counties of Derby and Nottingham; at the latter of which places, the mob set fire to the castle, the seat of the duke of Newcastle, the most hated of all tory leaders, and the head of borough proprietors. No one could suppose that the wishes or opinions of mobs like these were to be taken for a moment into account in the decision of a great political question; and in both houses of parliament ministers loudly expressed their disapprobation of such proceeding: but they were charged by their opponents with having indirectly encouraged riots by the language they had held, and the connexion in which they had placed themselves with large bodies of men acting illegally: certain it is, that while the bill was before the lords, a meeting of political unions took place at Birmingham, where, it was asserted, though undoubtedly with great exaggeration, that 150,000 per-

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

sons were congregated together. This assembly voted an address to the king, setting forth their alarm 'at the awful consequences' which might arise from the failure of the bill; their pain at imagining it possible 'that the house of lords should be so infatuated as to reject it;' and their earnest desire that his majesty would create as many peers as might be necessary to ensure its success: in the speeches of several persons who harangued this meeting, the most violent doctrines were broached; and one of the resolutions agreed to, was a vote of thanks to lord Althorp and lord John Russell: this was acknowledged by those statesmen in terms which were considered too courteous toward such an illegal and dangerous association; as well as bearing too hard on that branch of the legislature, against which popular indignation was particularly directed.

Riots at
Bristol, &c.

The continuance of earl Grey in office, and his majesty's declaration, 'that he had the highest confidence in his ministry,' doubtless had a strong effect in preserving general tranquillity: still, as the year advanced, a spirit of insubordination seemed to increase: at Croydon, the archbishop of Canterbury was grossly insulted, while presiding over a meeting of the society for the propagation of the Gospel; in Somersetshire, the bishop of the diocese was rudely attacked, when engaged in the solemn ceremony of consecrating a new church; and several other obnoxious prelates were burned in effigy: these, however, were but trifles, compared with the devastation committed at Bristol, when its recorder, sir Charles Wetherell, who had been the most furious opposer of reform in the house of commons, arrived there on the twenty-ninth of October, to discharge his official duties. Sir Charles, who had been received on his road from Bath with the execrations of an immense multitude, was attacked by so violent a mob at the Mansion-house, after he had opened his commission, that he was soon compelled to seek for safety by flight and in disguise: this, however, did not stop the outrages of the populace, indignant against the tory magistrates of their corporation, and unrestrained by the military force present, through

the weak and vacillating conduct of its commander. Accordingly, the prisons, the episcopal palace, the Mansion-house, the Custom-house, the Excise-office, with great part of Queen's-square, fell a sacrifice to the flames; also a large number of warehouses, many of which were filled with wine and spirits, shared in the conflagration; and Bristol presented a scene which could not have been exceeded by that which London exhibited during the riots of 1780: the soldiers, who had been sent out of the city, were now at length recalled; the magistrates brought out the *posse comitatus*; and as parties of cavalry, infantry, and artillery arrived, tranquillity was partially restored: the total number of killed and wounded, that were known, amounted nearly to 100; but about 200 were taken prisoners during the outrages, and several were afterwards captured with plundered property in their possession: almost two months, however, elapsed before a special commission was appointed to try the offenders; when eighty-one were convicted, and five left for execution; but four only suffered the extremity of the law. A military court of inquiry having been instituted on the conduct of the officers commanding at Bristol, the result was the appointment of a court-martial on colonel Brereton; but when it had sat four days, its proceedings were cut short by the death of the prisoner; who, being overcome by his feelings, and the weight of evidence against him, shot himself through the heart: another court-martial followed, on captain Warrington, senior officer of the third dragoon guards; whose defence for his neglect in suppressing the riots and preserving the buildings rested mainly on the want of directions from colonel Brereton, and of assistance from the city magistrates; the head of whom purposely concealed himself when his presence was most needed; whilst all the aldermen excused themselves for not accompanying the soldiers, by their inability to ride on horseback. General sir Charles Dalbiac, the crown prosecutor, laid down, on this occasion, the following doctrine as a fundamental principle of the common law:—‘that if the occasion

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

demands immediate action, and no opportunity is given for procuring the advice or sanction of a magistrate, it is the duty of every subject to act on his own responsibility, in suppressing a riotous and tumultuous assembly; and whatever may be done by him honestly, in the execution of that object, he will be justified and supported by the common law: that law acknowledges no distinction between the private citizen and the soldier, who is still a citizen, lying under the same obligation, and invested with the same authority to preserve the king's peace, as any other subject.' This was the doctrine of the great lord Mansfield, and it was now confirmed by the authority of lord chief justice Tindal: yet it was vehemently attacked in the public prints as unconstitutional, and dangerous to the liberty of the subject!

About the time when such disgraceful scenes were passing at Bristol, some partial disturbances broke out at Bath, Coventry, and Worcester; but these, being vigorously opposed by the municipal and military powers, were speedily put down, without bloodshed, or any material destruction of property: in consequence, however, a proclamation was issued by his majesty in council, on the second of November, exhorting all classes of his subjects to unite in suppressing tumults: but, as the winter advanced, the alarm of the executive government increased; and apprehensions were entertained, lest the peace of the country should be seriously endangered by formidable associations, especially those in London, Birmingham, and Manchester; which began not only to use daring language, but to appoint councils and officers, and to assume a regular plan of organisation: the rapid increase of these unions, and the boldness of their proceedings, having at length made it necessary that some steps should be taken to lay them under restraint, the Gazette of the twenty-second of November contained a proclamation, declaring their illegality, and warning all subjects of the realm against entering into such combinations.

During this time, Ireland continued in a distracted

state; associations under various appellations and pretexts of political discussion, were promoted, and the passions of the people continually excited for repeal of the union by Mr. O'Connell; while counter-addresses and admonitory proclamations were issued by Mr. Stanley the Irish secretary, declaring that government, though it had no intention of suppressing a peaceful expression of public opinion at legal and constitutional assemblies, would guard against such abuse of them as might lead to the violation of the laws or breach of the public peace. At length the magistrates dispersed one of these meetings, and apprehended the great agitator, with his principal coadjutors, for illegal acts: true bills being found against them by the grand jury, Mr. O'Connell put in a demurrer; but withdrew it, and pleaded Not Guilty: after several attempts to delay the trial, he withdrew that plea also; and pleaded guilty to the first fourteen counts in the indictment, respecting the holding of meetings in contempt of proclamations: many were the discussions in parliament, whether government had made any compromise with the agitators, since none of them were brought up for judgment; but there is no reason to suppose that such was the case, in opposition to the denial of ministers: that they were not so brought up, is sufficiently accounted for by the state both of England and Ireland. In the latter country, dreadful disturbances still continued, until the insurrection act was enforced by proclamation in several counties, and a special commission sent to try offenders: the refusal to pay tithes now became general; and many frightful collisions occurred between the peasantry, and the authorities which endeavored to repress their outrages; midnight violence, incendiarism, and other acts of atrocity increased; so that many of the gentry fled from their homes, and took refuge in Limerick or Dublin; while those that remained were obliged to barricade their houses, and keep guard day and night: some persons of high respectability withdrew altogether from Ireland, transferring their families and property to Great Britain. At this time also alarming accounts

CHAP.
LXVII.
1831.

were received from our West India colonies, particularly Antigua, where an insurrection of the negroes broke out, through a suppression of the Sunday market without an equivalent to the slaves; nor could tranquillity be restored without military aid, and the execution of several ringleaders. At Barbadoes and other islands an idea prevailed among the slave population, that although the British king and parliament, had declared them free, liberty was still withheld from them by their owners.

Ravages of
the cholera.

Contemporaneously with the tumultuous proceedings above described, the nation was this year visited by Asiatic cholera; which frightful malady, first appearing in 1817 on the banks of the Ganges, gradually advanced to the northern shores of Great Britain, and reached them in the month of October this year: before the close of which, it found its way from Sunderland and Newcastle to the suburbs of the metropolis; where, for a time, its outrages were generally confined to the victims of intemperance and vice: but it soon began to attack patients of all descriptions, and to spread from the capital into the provinces; so that scarcely any part of the empire escaped this dreadful scourge: its inflictions, however, by reason probably of the habits of the people and the nature of the climate, were less violent than in any other nation which it visited. A board of health was established, which made a daily report of cases, but was remarkable for the variety of opinions which it elicited from medical practitioners; the main points controverted being, whether the disease was contagious or not—whether it was the Indian cholera, or a new complaint—whether imported, or indigenous—whether it partook of the properties of the plague, or was to be regarded as a transient evil. The proportion of deaths was found to be about one to three; but the remarkable freedom of some places from this malady in the neighborhood of its ravages, occasioned many to conceive that its propagation was extended by currents in the air.

In France also this year was distinguished by

tumults; especially at Lyons, where disturbances among the workmen advanced to such a height, that the duke of Orleans, with a large military force, was despatched thither, accompanied by marshal Soult, the war minister, invested with extraordinary powers to quell the revolt. In the Netherlands, after prince Leopold had accepted the crown, Holland declared the existing armistice at an end: a Dutch army entered Belgium, and attacked Leopold's troops at Hasselt and Louvain; which latter city it captured, but was obliged to retire before a large French force: but these marches of the Dutch and French troops became a subject of debate, in consequence of which the latter were recalled: another set of articles was then framed by the conference, which declared that the acceptance of them should be compulsory: they were readily accepted by Belgium, but rejected by Holland, whose offers to negotiate were in turn rejected; after which, a treaty was signed between the five powers and Leopold, who was recognised by them as king of Belgium: against this instrument the Dutch plenipotentiaries protested; feeling a certainty of being secretly backed in their pretensions by some of the contracting powers, and supported by a strong party, even in Great Britain; nor were they deceived in their expectations.

In Spain insurrections were followed by defeats, arrests, and executions; while the hopes of the Portuguese constitutionalists revived, when Don Pedro, abdicating the Brazilian throne in favor of his son, returned to Europe, and made preparations for a descent on Portugal. The state of Brunswick saw, not an abdication, but an expulsion, of its despotic ruler by his subjects; who, by this act, only anticipated a sentence of the Germanic diet, declaring his despotism and appointing his brother to the sovereignty. Revolutionary symptoms also manifested themselves in Hanover, where the university of Gottingen, long noted for its republican principles, spread abroad doctrines calculated to excite insurrection, and at length proceeded to such lengths that the governor-general

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

Foreign
affairs.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

was obliged to use military aid, suspend the university, dismiss the students, and imprison two of the factious professors: these measures having had the desired effect, the college soon afterwards resumed its academical functions. In Parma, Modena, and the papal states, insurrections were put down by Austrian interference, and every species of cruelty was put in practice by the old governments when restored. Greece, for whose pacification the powers of Europe had labored so long, was now the scene of a civil war: the popularity of the president Capo d'Istria, either from his too great attachment to Russian interests, or from the jealousy and discontent of the chiefs, unused to control and eager for power, had rapidly declined: he became suspicious and tyrannical; inflicted arbitrary punishments more like the despotic deputy of Russia, than the elected head of a free state; and, before the year closed, lost his life by assassination. But of all people, the fate of the Poles was most calculated to excite commiseration: driven to insurrection by the faithless and tyrannical conduct of Nicholas, betrayed by France, deserted by England, and persecuted in their low estate by Austria and Prussia, they fell after an heroic struggle: Warsaw was taken, and the Polish armies disbanded; the nobles were degraded; women of the highest rank were subjected to violation by the common soldiers; and thousands of every rank, age, and sex, were driven by the whips of Cossacks into a Siberian exile, despoiled of their property, clothed in sackcloth, and tortured by the most cruel punishments: thus their nationality was destroyed, as far as human ingenuity could destroy it, for ever.

Meeting of
parliament.

The British parliament did not re-assemble till the sixth of December, when the king went in state to the house of peers, and delivered an elaborate speech; in the course of which he recommended to them 'a speedy and satisfactory settlement of the reform question, which became daily of more pressing importance to the security of the state, as well as to the contentment and welfare of the people.' But to effect this, a

new bill became necessary, which was accordingly introduced on the twelfth of the same month by lord John Russell, with some improvements both in the process of disfranchisement and in the qualification of electors; while an objection, which had been previously raised against the population census of 1821, was obviated by that of the present year being adopted.⁹ The new bill was again subjected to a fiery ordeal: its democratic influence was strongly condemned, and an amendment was moved by lord Porchester, seconded by sir Edward Sugden, who started a frivolous objection unworthy of his high reputation. 'On that part of the bill regulating the right of voting in boroughs and cities,' he observed, 'there must be an annual valuation of every house in England, which would furnish an excellent trade to surveyors; since there was nothing more changeable in value than this sort of property.' After urging several other technical frivolities of the same kind, without attacking the grand principle of the measure, he remarked, that its true title was—'a bill to encourage the growth of ten pound houses in England.' Mr. Macauley, however, entered into an elaborate defence of the plan, without noticing these particular objections made against its details; and concluded with a bold declaration,—that, 'by fair means or foul, either through parliament or over parliament, the question of reform must be carried: therefore,' said he, 'throw open the gates to an enemy, that can force an entrance through the breach: show that our constitution, though not exempt from the defects which time must produce in every human work, possesses within itself the power of self-reparation; and let that end, which was sought too often by a savage revolution, be gained by a peaceful and tranquil reform.' Mr. Croker made a desultory harangue, for the purpose of attacking ministers on the subject of the late disturbances, and the dangers still menacing the kingdom; all of which he attributed to their con-

CHAP.
LXVII.1831.
New re-
form bill.

⁹ In 1821, the population of England was 11,261,437; of Wales, 717,438; of Scotland, 2,093,456: in 1831, England, 13,089,338; Wales, 805,236; Scotland, 2,365,807. Summary of Great Britain, in 1821, 14,391,631; in 1831, 16,537,398; being an increase of fifteen per cent.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1831.

duct; calling them 'the servants of a faction whom they dared not to disobey:' in reply, lord Althorp said, 'it was idle to assert that this bill was the first link in a chain of disturbance: clamor had existed long ago, and had constantly increased, until it was raised to an irrepressible height by the declaration of the late administration.' An adjournment took place to the following evening; when, after explanations by the noble mover, and a vindication both of the original measure and its subsequent alterations, by Mr. Stanley; together with an harangue in a mingled strain of argument and sarcasm by sir C. Wetherell, and a solemn protest from sir R. Peel against so great and precipitate an alteration of the best constitution recorded in history, a division took place at half-past one on Sunday morning; when there appeared, for the second reading of the bill 324, and against it 162; the majority in favor of ministers being just two to one: the house then adjourned to the seventeenth of January following.

Thus stood this great political question; with a certain prospect of success in the commons, though various opinions were formed respecting its treatment by the lords: meanwhile, public journals and political associations loudly demanded an immediate increase of the peerage, in order to force the bill through the upper house; and though, at any other time, and under any other circumstances, the very suggestion of such a measure would have raised a violent outcry, in the present case both the king and his ministers were exposed to severe attacks for delaying to gratify the popular wish.

When parliament met on the seventeenth of January, ministers expressed an intention of going into committee upon the reform bill on the twentieth; which proposition was resisted by Messrs. Croker and Goulburn, as bringing the house into a consideration of details, before they had received that information, without which no proper judgment could be formed: lord John Russell, however, and lord Althorp would not consent to any delay; and the

bill was accordingly pushed into committee, where its details were attacked by Mr. Croker, sir R. Peel, sir R. Vivyan, and many others, with as much hostility as they had shown to the general plan: in particular, the clause which proposed to confer eight additional members on the metropolitan districts, met with violent opposition. The marquis of Chandos, after contending that to extend the elective franchise in that quarter would lead to great excitement, and give to the capital a preponderating influence over the rest of the country, moved an amendment against the clause; in favor of which there appeared 236 votes in a house of 552 members; leaving a majority for ministers of eighty.

It would be a tedious task to pursue the progress of this bill through the commons: it got out of committee about the middle of March; and on the nineteenth of that month lord J. Russell moved its third reading: this being opposed by lord Mahon, who proposed, as an amendment, that the bill be read that day six months, a warm debate ensued, which was continued on the twentieth and twenty-second: the arguments used were the same which had been so often repeated in the house; and several members declared, that although the bill had not come out of the committee with all the improvements which they had desired and expected, they would still vote for its third reading, because they believed that a rejection would now produce greater mischief than any which could arise from its provisions: the division gave to ministers a clear majority of 116 in a house of 594 members. On the twenty-third, the measure was passed; an amendment, which went to raise the qualification to twenty pounds in Liverpool, and all new boroughs returning two members, having been negatived without a division.

On Monday, March the twenty-sixth, the reform bill was carried to the upper house by lords Russell and Althorp, accompanied by an unusual number of members; when the chancellor, who announced to their lordships the message of the commons, im-

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

Reform bill
passed by
the com-
mons.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

mediately read the title of the bill with peculiar emphasis. The most important part of its reception consisted in the speeches of lords Harrowby and Wharncliffe, who had led the opposition last session, and now announced their intention to vote for the second reading; induced probably to take this course by a desire to save the respectability of their house from the intrusion of a band of political agents, formed into peers, to serve a temporary purpose: the bishop of London also was so impressed with the dangers hanging over the country, that he resolved to follow this example, to the astonishment of the duke of Wellington and the marquis of Londonderry, who declared their opinions to be unchanged, and their hostility undiminished. Previously to the second reading, the duke of Buckingham gave notice, that if there should be, as he trusted there would be, a majority against it, he would bring in, after the Easter recess, a bill for the purpose of giving members to large towns, whose importance intitled them to representation; also joining and consolidating certain boroughs, each of which now returned two members to parliament, in order to make room for the new representatives, and prevent any man from being deprived of his existing rights; whilst a third provision would be to extend the elective franchise, so as to prevent its abuse in boroughs: in proof of the sincerity of his intentions, his grace moved the insertion of this notice on the journals of the house.

Debates on
the reform
bill in the
lords.

At six o'clock, earl Grey rose to move the second reading of the ministerial bill, which he did in a speech courteous and conciliatory, though not destitute of firmness. After briefly mentioning its important nature, its interesting object, the large majority that had sent it up, and the unequivocal support it had received from the people, he adverted to the duke of Buckingham's notice of motion: this, he said, relieved him from any necessity of defending the principle of his own bill; for it appeared now to be universally conceded: he was not called on to except even the duke of Wellington; since his grace's last

declaration on the subject admitted that some degree of reform was necessary. The noble earl then proceeded to notice the alterations introduced, defended the ten pound qualification from some objections raised against it, and concluded with an affecting appeal to their lordships respecting the unjust attacks made on him, for having proposed a measure, which in his opinion was required by the duty which he owed to his sovereign and his country; a measure, now generally admitted, in its principle, as necessary; while the only difference existing regarded its extent. Disclaiming all notion of advising their lordships to yield to intimidation, he could not help calling their attention to that awful silence of the people, now prevailing, and taking place of the outcry which first marked the progress of this bill; a silence which might perhaps lead some to imagine that they were not viewing the measure with the same feelings of interest: but he cautioned their lordships against forming such an opinion: 'for,' said he, 'though the people are silent, they are looking at our proceedings this night no less intensely than they have looked ever since the question was first agitated. I know it is pretended by many, that the nation has no confidence in the peers; because there is an opinion out of doors, that the interests of the aristocracy are separated from those of the people: on the part of this house, however, I disclaim all such separation of interests; and therefore I am willing to believe, that the silence, of which I have spoken, is the fruit of a latent hope still existing in their bosoms.'

Lord Ellenborough then rose; and, after a vehement attack on the whole bill, moved, as an amendment, 'that it be read a second time that day six months.' This gave rise to a very animated debate; which, being adjourned to the next day, was re-opened by the earl of Shrewsbury; who declared himself at a loss to know from what evils the constitution, of which some persons appeared so enamored, had saved the country: we had had expensive wars; we had £800,000,000 of debt; we had had rebellion and revolution, with great

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

and frequent commercial embarrassments; and we now saw the strange picture of an intelligent, active population, idle and starving in the midst of abundance. The only way to test the value of our constitution, was to adopt a measure which would give its merits fair play: by passing the bill before the house, their lordships would restore their connexion with the people, and their power of doing good; the only power which they ought to covet: they must either consent to right the people, or the people would right themselves. After thus expressing himself respecting the state to which 'the rule of a dominant oligarchy had brought the country, and against which the exasperated nation had at length risen,' his lordship declared, that in all things, that oligarchy had found on the episcopal bench willing coadjutors. 'But if the clergy,' said he, 'know their own interest, (and it is generally supposed they are not unskilled in matters of personal concern) they ought to feel the necessity of now coming forward to do their duty by the country: hitherto they have shown themselves too often the greatest enemies of the people; willing agents of the worst system of tyranny; ready abettors of, and participators in, the vilest acts of extravagance, spoliation, and corruption: now is the time for them to make some compensation to the people for long years of contumely and wrong.' After several observations on the more dignified attitude which the adversaries of the bill would take by boldly opposing it *in limine*, than by stooping to the subtle and desultory warfare which they were about to commence, the noble earl declared, 'that he would not mince matters; if the house of commons needed reform, so did the house of peers, to prevent the danger of continual collision, and to secure that unity of action, which was essential to the right management of the national affairs.'

Few addresses occasioned a greater ferment in the house than this, in which the earl of Limerick saw the early fruits of catholic emancipation: little did he expect so soon to find one of the first catholic peers in the realm pronouncing a philippic, not only against

the existence of that house, but against every thing which had existed for the last century. The earl of Mansfield and the duke of Wellington reprobated the bill in the most unmeasured terms; and not the bill only, but 'the waverers' also; who were accused of deserting their banners by voting for a second reading: but lords Harrowby and Wharncliffe ably defended themselves on this point, and a second adjournment took place.

CHAP.
LXVII.
1832.

The earl of Winchelsea, in opening the debate next day, spoke with great indignation against an augmentation of the peerage; declaring that if such a measure were adopted, he would no longer sit in the house, but would retire, and 'bide his time, till the return of those good days, which would enable him to vindicate the insulted laws of his country, by bringing an unconstitutional minister before the bar of his peers.' He was followed by the duke of Buckingham, who asserted, 'that the pestilence of the cholera was nothing in comparison with the contamination to which this bill would subject the constitution.' It was also opposed by the earl of Falmouth, the marquis of Bristol, and the bishops of Lincoln and Exeter; who were answered by the lords Radnor and Lansdowne, as well as by the bishops of London and Landaff. An adjournment was then moved by lord Kenyon.

The debate on Thursday evening was resumed by lord Wynford; after whom lord Durham rose, and, in a state of high excitement, gave utterance to what was perhaps the most powerful speech made by any member of either house, in favor of the bill. The excitement alluded to arose from a passage in the bishop of Exeter's speech, where, descanting on the tone and temper of the press, he spoke of certain articles in the *Times* journal, as, 'breathing the inspiration of the treasury.' After complimenting the learned lord who had spoken last, in having adopted a tone free from party asperity, and rancorous animosity against his majesty's ministers, very different from that of a right reverend prelate who spoke last night;¹¹ he observed;—

¹¹ The bishop of Exeter.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

‘Of that exhibition I shall only say; that if coarse and virulent invective, malignant and false insinuations, the grossest perversion of historical facts, decked out with all the choicest flowers of pamphleteering slang——’ Here the noble lord was called to order, and the earl of Winchelsea moved, that the words ‘false insinuations,’ and ‘pamphleteering slang,’ should be taken down. After some observations from earl Grey, lord Holland, and the duke of Buckingham, lord Durham went on to state, that he had not the slightest objection to his words being taken down: he would not stop to inquire whether they were the most elegant which he could have used, or quite suitable to the noble earl’s taste; but they were the only words which could describe correctly the right reverend prelate’s speech. ‘With regard to retracting them,’ he said, ‘in obedience to the noble duke, I must observe, that, from the terms in which the right reverend prelate couched his insinuations, I could have no doubt that he alluded to me; since the same charge has been made in those weekly publications, which are notorious for scurrility and indecency: when therefore I found the charge repeated here, in terms which could not be misunderstood, I determined to take the earliest opportunity of stating to your lordships, that it was as false as scandalous: I now repeat that declaration; and I pause, to give any noble lord the opportunity of taking down my words.’

Lord Durham then resumed his seat for a moment; but as no one rose, he proceeded to observe, that, as it appeared that no farther interruption was to be offered him, he would dismiss the subject; while he trusted, that, if he had expressed himself with too much warmth, their lordships would reflect, that to all the tortures of a mind afflicted by domestic loss, had been of late superadded calumnies of the basest description; calculated to wound, not only his own feelings, but those of all most dear to him. Returning, however, to the question, he asserted, that the supporters of the bill had been charged by a noble duke and earl, (Wellington and Mansfield) with having created an excite-

ment in the public mind which led to that general demand for reform, now admitted to prevail by many who formerly denied its existence. 'On what facts,' he said, 'these noble lords found their assertions, I cannot comprehend: if there be any subject, which, more than others, has been discussed, both in and out of parliament, especially within the last fifty years, it is that of a reform in the representation of the people: ever since our revolution it has been advocated by the most eminent men which this country can boast: from the year 1783, when the celebrated Yorkshire petition was presented, it has never been lost sight of by the people; though taken up with more or less energy, according to the circumstances of the times.' He then enumerated the distinguished characters who had patronised this measure; and declared, that the noble and gallant duke was not supported by facts, in saying that the feeling was one of late growth; still less, when he ascribed it to the examples of recent revolutions in France and Belgium: that it had assumed a much more formidable appearance within the last four or five years, he (lord Durham) did not deny; but this was owing, in a great measure, to repeated refusals to grant elective privileges to the large towns of Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham, when fitting opportunities presented themselves; it had arisen also from the exposures which had taken place through parliamentary inquiries relative to Grampound, Penryn, and East Retford, laying bare scenes of the grossest political profligacy and corruption: but above all, it had proceeded from that great multitude, the middle classes, having identified themselves with this question;—classes, whose emancipation alone would account for the intensity of feeling with which the measure had been received; while it demonstrated the improbability of the country being satisfied with less reform than that afforded by this bill.

His lordship then proceeded to show, that, up to the revolution of 1688, the object of each successive struggle had been to prevent the sovereign from obtaining despotic power. At that period the crown was

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

defeated, and has ever since been dependent on, and at the mercy of, two parties among the higher orders: between them the contest for political power has been bitter and incessant; while the country has been well or ill governed, according to the principles of that party which predominated: for a long time people acquiesced in the supremacy of the higher orders, and their exclusive possession of political privileges; but within the last fifty years a great change had taken place in the state of society, whose two extremes had been gradually meeting; the one standing still, while the other was gradually approaching it, and rendering itself competent to the discharge of higher duties: thus the people had naturally become desirous of political privileges; and the result of their continued exclusion must be a political convulsion, necessarily a destructive one; as it would arise from the unnatural compression of great power by insufficient means.

He next went into the question of the right or propriety, with which the middle classes claimed such privileges; in opposition to the noble duke, who had described them as paupers or beggars: so far from this, their wealth doubled or trebled that of the higher orders; and, as for their intelligence, he directed attention to the great commercial towns, with their literary societies, scientific institutions, and all other associations, tending to the advancement of the human race: by the example and purse of the middle classes were these supported and maintained; while the gentry, living apart, enjoyed merely the amusements and luxuries peculiar to their own order; so that, whenever they were brought together on public occasions, their superiority in learning or intellect was no longer apparent.

Such being the case, his lordship asked, whether that was a fit and proper state of the constitution, which excluded from the enjoyment of political privileges and power, a large body of men, possessed of talents, skill, and wealth, merely because they did not happen to be included in a particular class, endowed with privileges granted in different times and different

circumstances? Again, did the working of the constitution, in its present exclusive state, produce no other mischievous effects, beside their exclusion? Did those persons who virtually represented them perform the duties of their trust advantageously for the country? The answer of the people had always been in the negative; and for the correctness of that assertion, he declared, that he could accumulate proofs on proofs; but a few would suffice. When this corrupt parliamentary system first came into operation, after the revolution, the national debt amounted to £16,000,000: at the end of the last war it reached near £800,000,000! while the national expenditure had, during that time, increased from £5,500,000 to more than £94,000,000; and the poor-rates from £1,000,000 to £7,000,000. In a single reign only, that of George III. £27,000,000 had been lavished in subsidies to the great continental powers; and in that same period our naval and military expenditure amounted to £928,000,000; so that the luxury of indulging in war cost this country a sum little short of one thousand millions.

All these proofs of unlimited and unchecked expenditure, with many others, became known to the people at the end of the war: great distress followed; much discontent and loud complaints prevailed: and how were they met? By conciliation or concession? No, truly; but by every species of repressive and coercive enactment: measures to prevent public meetings for petition, to fetter the press, to suspend the habeas corpus act, and to grant indemnity bills, were proposed and adopted by the house of commons: 'those proceedings,' said his lordship, 'seem, if I may judge from their cheers, to be approved by the noble lords opposite: they were not, however, I can assure them, grateful to the people; who, seeing their liberties attacked, and their resources squandered, through the instrumentality of a house which was theoretically the guardians of them, naturally turned attention to the mode of electing that house, which neither represented their feelings nor protected their interests. The picture then presented to view was no less startling and

CHAP.
LXVII.
— 1832. —

disgusting, than that of our finances, which I have just alluded to: they found one portion nominated by peers; a second, by commoners; a third, by trafficking attorneys, selling seats to the highest bidder; a fourth, indebted for its return to the most unblushing bribery and corruption; in one part of the empire, a park, with no population, or at least one of the smallest kind, returning two members; in another, a town inhabited by hundreds of thousands, yet without any representation at all; and even that small part of the house which was still dependent on the public voice, so fettered and circumscribed by the immense expenditure required, as to be virtually placed in the hands of a very small class. My lords, all this led to a state of things which has been so prophetically and accurately described by a celebrated writer, whose opinions are generally pleasing to noble lords, that I make no apology for substituting his glowing words for my feeble expressions: this led, to use the language of Mr. Burke, to ‘an addressing house of commons, and a petitioning nation; a house full of confidence, when the nation was plunged in despair; in full harmony with ministers, whom the people regarded with abhorrence; which voted thanks, when public opinion called on them for retrenchment; eager to grant, when the general voice demanded account; which, in all disputes between the people and the administration, presumed against the people, and punished their disorders, but refused to inquire into the provocations given them: this led to so unnatural and monstrous a state of things; to an assembly, which may be a great, and wise, and awful senate; but not to any popular purpose a house of commons.’

Lord Durham concluded this able and spirited address, by stating his opinion, that he had shown sufficient reasons for the prevalent desire of reform, without ascribing its origin to ministerial instigation, or to those French and Belgian revolutions, which haunted the imagination of the noble and gallant duke opposite: he also asserted that the British

revolution of 1641, the French revolution of 1793, and the loss of our American colonies, might all have been averted by wise and timely concession: after investigating these positions, he asked noble lords, who talked of resistance, whether they had calculated the comparative amount of force arrayed on each side? on one, the crown, the house of commons, and the people; on the other, about 200 peers: he then warned them of the danger which they might incur from excommunication by their fellow-countrymen; asking, whether they were prepared to live solitary in the midst of multitudes; their mansions fortified with cannon, (as was lately that of the duke of Newcastle) and protected by troops, perhaps of faithful, but in the hour of danger, useless retainers? 'Surely,' said he, 'there must be something in this state of things most revolting to the habits and feelings of a British peer; yet these are the most favorable circumstances which can follow the rejection of this bill.' After contrasting the change between confidence and distrust, affection and hatred, as well as predicting the little advantage or consolation they would find in the temporary preservation of nomination boroughs, coupled with the dislike and aversion of their fellow citizens, his lordship declared, it was under a conviction that the claims of the people were not to be trifled with, that he and his colleagues came to the resolution of framing such a measure, as might not only give general satisfaction, but set the question intirely at rest.

He was followed by the earl of Caernarvon, lords Eldon, Tenterden, and Lyndhurst, against the bill as well as by the bishops of Rochester and Gloucester; the latter of whom took occasion to animadvert, with pointed, but just severity, on the attack which had been made by the catholic earl of Shrewsbury on the ecclesiastical bench. 'He has invited us,' said the right reverend prelate, 'to vote for the bill, because it will conduce to our own advantage; adding, that the clergy were specially noted for an attention to their own interests. If he meant, as I suppose he

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

did, our own private and personal interests, I reject the imputation with unutterable scorn: if he meant our regard for the interests of the church, then the clergy had, on this question, no interest distinct from the general weal.' With regard to the charges of profligacy in their political conduct, made against the bishops, as 'abettors of tyranny and oppression,' 'willing instruments of rapine and extortion,' he called on the noble earl, in the face of the house and of the country, either to abandon or to make them good: 'if he refuses,' said his lordship, 'to accept one of these alternatives, his long line of ancestry will not save him from disgrace. The schemes of oppression by James II., our last tyrant, no doubt had abettors: who they were I shall not say; but at all events, they were not protestant bishops: the first resistance made to that tyrant was among the clergy of the church of England, who opposed his oppressive system at the risk of liberty and life: though I wish not to detract from the glory of the ancestors of noble lords in this house, who joined in the expulsion of the tyrant; yet I can appeal to history in proof of the fact,—that but for the resistance of the protestant clergy throughout this country, the efforts of those distinguished persons might have failed; and the house of Brunswick, to which we owe our liberties, might have moved but little beyond a German principality.' After lord Goderich and the chancellor had each spoken in favor of the bill, earl Grey commenced his reply at five o'clock on Friday morning; in the course of which he noticed with great severity an attack made on him by the bishop of Exeter. 'The right reverend prelate,' said he, 'threw out insinuations about my ambition: let me tell him calmly, that the pulses of ambition may beat as strongly under sleeves of lawn, as under an ordinary habit.' Before he concluded, he would take leave to say one word on a question which had been frequently discussed out of doors, and in which he was in some degree personally concerned;—he alluded to the probable creation of peers: all the best constitutional writers admitted, that although the creation of

A large number of peers, for a particular object, was a measure which should rarely be resorted to; yet, in some cases, such as to avoid a collision between the two houses, it might be absolutely necessary: it was true, he had been, for many reasons, exceedingly averse to such a scheme; but he believed it would be found, that in a case of necessity, like that which he had stated, a creation of peers would be perfectly justifiable, and in accordance with the acknowledged principles of our constitution: more than this he would not say at present. After a short explanation from lord Caernarvon and the bishop of Exeter, the house divided; when the absolute majority for ministers was only nine; and the bill, having been read a second time, was ordered to be committed on the first day after the recess.

The lords broke up for the Easter holidays on the seventeenth of April, and the commons the day following: but on the sixteenth, the duke of Wellington thought proper to enter on the journals a protest, which embodied the principal objections urged against the measure; more especially its violation of chartered rights, and its introduction of an exorbitant degree of democratic influence into the constitution: this was signed by seventy-four other peers, including the dukes of Cumberland and Gloucester, with six prelates; but not by lord Lyndhurst.

Parliament stood adjourned to the seventh of May; and the interval was a period memorable in our annals. The associations and political unions throughout the kingdom were instantly on the alert, being tremblingly alive for the fate of the bill, on account of the small majority by which the second reading was carried: the people of Leeds were first in the field, and called a meeting on the nineteenth of April; when a number of able speeches were delivered, and an energetic address was voted to his majesty, whom they designated as 'their sheet-anchor—their refuge in the storm:' the last necessity was said to be at hand, and a creation of peers was earnestly implored: at Birmingham, a special meeting of its political union was held on the

Disturbed
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CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

twenty-seventh, Thomas Attwood, esq. in the chair when a series of resolutions passed; in consequence of which, a general meeting of all the associations from surrounding districts in the counties of Warwick, Worcester, and Stafford, was convened, on the seventh of May, at the foot of Newhall-hill; forming such an assemblage as perhaps this country never before witnessed: the grand northern division alone was estimated at near 100,000 people; its procession extending four miles, with 150 banners and eleven bands of music: upwards of 200 bands were in attendance, and more than 700 banners waved over the assembled throng. At half-past twelve the commencement of proceedings was announced by the sound of a bugle; and after many energetic speeches, a petition to the house of lords was carried, 'imploring them not to drive to despair a high-minded, generous, and fearless people; nor to urge them on, by a rejection of their claims, to demands of a much more extensive nature; but rather to pass the reform bill into a law, unimpaired in any of its great parts and provisions; more especially uninjured in the clauses relating to the ten pound franchise.'

The council of the Birmingham Union now declared its sittings permanent, until the fate of the bill should be decided. Similar meetings were held, about the same time, at Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, Dundee, &c. as well as throughout the south of England; at all of which, resolutions were agreed to, expressing unabated confidence in earl Grey and his colleagues; while petitions were drawn up to the king and house of lords, beseeching them to pass the bill unmutilated: the meeting at Edinburgh is said to have consisted of 50,000 persons, being held in the king's park, near Holyrood-house; from the windows of which the exiled sovereign of France might have witnessed another specimen of the working of that spirit, which he had vainly attempted to extinguish.

In the metropolis an extraordinary assembly of members of the National Union took place, on the

third of May, Joseph Hume, esq. in the chair; when various resolutions were carried, all urging the necessity of the bill being passed without alteration; while a petition to the lords stated, that in case of its mutation or rejection, 'there was reason to expect that the payment of taxes would cease; that other social obligations would be disregarded; and that the ultimate consequence might be the utter extinction of privileged orders.' Such was the position of the country, when parliament re-assembled on the seventh of May; and the house of lords went into committee on that bill which had created so extraordinary a sensation.

The anti-reformers lost no time in unmasking their batteries, after lord Grey had first moved the adoption of the disfranchising clause, relating to schedule A; proposing that the number fifty-six should not be specified, but that their lordships should come to a successive vote on each individual borough, as part of the clause: this he thought the best method of obviating objections which had been made to the clause as it now stood. Lord Lyndhurst then rose, and suggested, that it would be still more convenient to postpone all consideration of the first, as well as of the second clause, for the purpose of taking into consideration the boroughs and places to be enfranchised; a matter, which, in his opinion, ought to be discussed, before they entered on the question of disfranchisement: and this would involve nothing like a prejudgment of those clauses; for the house would reserve itself for the consideration of them, unprejudiced and unfettered, precisely as if they had not been postponed at all: he recommended such a mode of proceeding, because a bill of this kind ought to be essentially a bill of enfranchisement; of which principle disfranchisement ought only to be a consequence: the amendment was supported by lords Harrowby, Wharnccliffe, Winchelsea, Ellenborough, the duke of Wellington, &c., on the ground that its object was not to defeat schedules A and B. Several noble lords thought it expedient to enter on a rather suspicious defence of their character for integrity and fair dealing, before it was called

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

in question; but the duke of Newcastle honestly avowed that he supported the amendment, as he would support any other measure likely to frustrate the bill: the manœuvre, however, was quickly seen through, and exposed by the lord chancellor and earl Grey; the former of whom declared, that although a proposal had been made to omit all mention of the number of places to be disfranchised, this had not the slightest connexion with any intention of diminishing the number itself: the latter observed, that nothing could have been better devised to defeat the bill than the proposed amendment, which, if it were carried, he should consider fatal to the whole measure: he well knew, that opposition lords, if they could delay matters until they had silenced the clamors of Manchester and other large places, would venture on the rescue of some of their favorite boroughs; especially as they expected to win over to their side all the scot and lot voters: when the house divided, ministers were left in a minority of thirty-five; the votes for lord Lyndhurst's amendment being 151, and those against it 116; on which, earl Grey moved, that all farther consideration of the bill be deferred till Thursday the tenth. Lord Ellenborough having expressed his regret that ministers should thus interpose delay, took the opportunity of detailing those amendments or mutilations of the bill, which his party, after serious consideration intended to propose: these consisted in a disfranchisement of 113 boroughs, their privileges to be distributed among other places; a prohibition of persons to vote for counties, in respect of property situated in boroughs; the adoption of a more clear and certain mode of ascertaining the genuineness and value of holdings; and the retention, not only of the ten pound qualification, but that of scot and lot where it already existed. Here was a measure, of which one-half, proposed at the time when East Retford was disfranchised, would have kept the tories in power, and satisfied the nation: but lord Grey now felt himself justified in considering it as an insidious proposition, and safe in treating it with scorn; while the people, instead of being divided by

the artifice, expressed generally a contempt for its authors.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

Implicit reliance being placed on the king's firmness, an immediate creation of peers was confidently expected: on the eighth, ministers came to the unanimous resolution of pressing this measure; and when the cabinet had broken up, earl Grey and the lord chancellor proceeded instantly to Windsor: the king, however, hesitated, on account of the great number requisite, and the danger of such a precedent; nor can there be a doubt, but that the royal mind was perplexed by the reasonings and inflexible opposition of the tory peers; while he stood nearly alone, amidst his own family and court, in countenancing any part of the reform bill. Ministers requested, in the event of his majesty's resolution of rejecting their advice, to tender their resignation: the king desired till next day to deliberate; and on the morning of Wednesday, it was intimated to them that their resignation had been accepted.

Resigna-
tion of
ministers

This unlooked-for intelligence instantly roused the nation: it was no sooner announced in the house by the chancellor of the exchequer, than lord Ebrington gave notice of his intention to move an address to the king, on the state of public affairs, next evening; and lord Althorp's proposal, that this motion should be postponed for a short time, to prevent embarrassment in the formation of a new ministry, met with no acceptance. It became manifest to the friends of the ejected ministers, that nothing could immediately reinstate them but an insuperable obstacle placed in the way of their competitors; and what more difficult to be overcome, than a previous vote of the house of commons, which might tell the latter, that by accepting office they would act in defiance of that branch of the legislature which commanded the public purse? Accordingly, the motion, being submitted to the house, was carried by 288 voices against 208; and an address was presented to the king, expressing deep regret at the change in administration, and great anxiety that the reform bill should pass unmutilated; with an

CHAP.
LXVII.
1832.

earnest supplication, that his majesty would call such persons only to his councils as consented to promote that object.

Great masses of the population, eager for reform, were up simultaneously, and in co-operation with the house of commons: all stood, as it were, prepared for action; the country took an attitude of determined resolution; even other nations looked with intense anxiety to this contest; and the most important interests of mankind appeared to be suspended on its issue. In the metropolis, the National Union met on the very evening of the day which saw the resignation of ministers; 1200 new members enrolled themselves at that meeting, and 2000 more on the morrow: it was unanimously resolved, 'that the betrayal of the people's cause was not attributable to lord Grey or his administration, but to the base and foul treachery of others; that meetings be recommended in every county, town, and parish throughout the kingdom; which, by inducing compliance with the unanimous wishes of the people, may prevent the mischief that would otherwise result from the general indignation; that a petition be presented to the house of commons, praying the appointment of commissioners to receive the supplies; and that, until the bill pass, they be not managed by the lords of the treasury.' On Thursday, May the tenth, the common council met at Guildhall, and passed a number of resolutions, expressing their mortification and disappointment at the distressing communication made by ministers, that his majesty had refused to them the means of carrying the reform bill through the house of lords, though passed by a large majority of the commons, and by an overwhelming majority of the people; declaring, that the advisers of such a refusal had put to hazard the stability of the throne and tranquillity of the country; also petitioning the commons to withhold supplies till such reform bill be carried; and extolling the conduct of earl Grey and his coadjutors: a committee was appointed to meet daily for the adoption of such measures as might be deemed necessary. Next day, the livery also met,

and passed a similar string of resolutions; adding, however, 'that they viewed with distrust and abhorrence, attempts at once interested and hypocritical, to delude and mislead the people by pretended plans of reform, promised or proposed by insidious enemies of all reform.' The speeches at this meeting were made in a daring spirit of resistance to any administration that might attempt to assume the reins of government, without the whole bill; but more especially were they hostile to the duke of Wellington, who was represented as desirous of governing this country by the sword: his majesty himself was not spared, for yielding to domestic influence, and pressing to his bosom pernicious counsellors; but the majority of the house of lords was more peculiarly attacked, as men who would mix blood with corruption; friends of every despotism; representatives of Miguel and Ferdinand, of Russian lords and German ladies: on the same day, the electors of Westminster met at the Crown and Anchor tavern, pursuant to notice, for the purpose of 'adopting such measures as the alarming state of the country required:' sir Francis Burdett was called to the chair; and the speakers, excited by the rabid eloquence of Mr. O'Connell, were still more violent than any who had yet come forward at this alarming crisis: similar meetings were held in Southwark; also in the parliamentary district of Marylebone, St. Pancras, and Paddington, where a crowd of 20,000 persons were harangued by Mr. Hume, who had been called to the chair; and a strong address to the king was agreed to.

News of earl Grey's resignation reached Birmingham on the morning of Thursday, May the tenth; and by eleven o'clock a printed placard was exhibited in many windows; of which the following is a copy:— 'Notice—No taxes paid here until the reform bill is passed!' In the course of the day, 500 gentlemen, who had hitherto stood aloof, enrolled themselves members of the Union: at four in the afternoon, the inhabitants of the town and vicinity assembled in immense multitudes at Newhall-hill; and a petition was voted to the house of commons, which, in addition

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

to a prayer that the supplies might be stopped, contained this ominous sentence:—‘Your petitioners find it declared in the bill of rights, that the people of England may have arms for their defence, suitable to their condition, and as allowed by law; and they apprehend, that this great right will be enforced generally, in order that the people may be prepared for any circumstances that may arise:’ a deputation was then named for the purpose of carrying their petition to London, and communicating to the common council, and city of Westminster, the determination taken by the counties of Warwick and Stafford to aid them in the common cause.

Manchester received intelligence of earl Grey’s resignation on Thursday forenoon; and a petition to the commons, to stop the supplies, was that same day signed by 25,000 persons: another was sent on the fourteenth, from Liverpool, by the Reform Union, which met in Clayton-square, viscount Molyneux, son of the earl of Sefton, being in the chair. The news spread rapidly from south to north, exciting in Scotland, as well as in Ireland, the most energetic measures; nor do the annals of this country present a more alarming period than the interval between the ninth and sixteenth of May; the former being the day on which his majesty accepted the resignation of the reform ministry, and the latter that on which it was recalled to office. The tories, who had for some time been encouraged by their success with the king, and at the critical moment had received private intelligence of his altered sentiments, endeavored, by putting the bill out of joint, to get it into their own hands; or to obtain a pretext for representing lord Grey as a pertinacious and impracticable man, stickling for a mere point of form, against the opinion of a majority: it was no part of their plan to drive his lordship from office with the honors of popularity; but rather to exhibit him as an incapable supporter, if not a betrayer, of the cause which he had taken in hand: they also desired leisure to form plans for their own return to power; but were wholly unprepared for the readiness

and determination with which the premier comprehended and defeated their plot.

As soon as the king had resolved to accept the resignation of his cabinet, he sent for lord Lyndhurst, desiring that nobleman to obtain the opinion of parties respecting the advice which he had rejected, and also authorising him to adopt measures for the formation of a new ministry: at the same time, he declared, that 'extensive reform' was the express condition on which such a ministry must be based. It was thought somewhat strange that the noble lord should instantly carry the royal message to the duke of Wellington, whose sentiments on the subject of reform had been so fully and openly declared: but his grace was found willing to make large sacrifices, and encounter any degree of obloquy, in order to extricate his sovereign from embarrassment: he desired no office, much less that of prime minister; yet, if necessary for the king's service, he was ready to serve in any way that might be thought fit. After some consultation between these noble lords, it was thought advisable to offer the first place to sir Robert Peel; but that wary statesman refused the bait: by an 'extensive reform,' he could not but understand all the main principles of the bill; and it was impossible for him to accept office, when, hostile as he had constantly shown himself to every plan of extensive reform, he felt that he could be of no service to the king or to the country: lord Lyndhurst communicated the nature of his commission to Mr. Baring, lord Caernarvon, and a few other influential persons, who were not unwilling to take subordinate situations; but no leader was forthcoming. In the mean time, lord Ebrington's motion in the house of commons interposed insurmountable difficulties in the way of negotiations: a new ministry must be sought among the direct opponents of the bill; office must be accepted in defiance of the lower house; and the utter hopelessness of any change from a dissolution of parliament was apparent from the determined temper of the people: on Tuesday the fifteenth, therefore, lord Lyndhurst was obliged to inform his majesty, that the commission with which

CHAP.
LXVII.

18 32.

he had been entrusted had failed; and the king was reduced to the humiliating necessity of renewing intercourse with his discarded ministers. The same evening, earl Grey announced to the peers, that he had received a communication from his majesty, though of too recent a date to be followed by any decided consequence: both houses adjourned to the seventeenth; but before the commons separated, a debate had taken place on the presentation of the London petition, which, for boldness of invective, and spirit-stirring declamation, was hardly ever surpassed: it turned chiefly on the supposed conduct of the duke of Wellington, and some others, in accepting office under the peculiar circumstances of the period. Immediately before the adjournment, Mr. Baring stated, that all communications with the duke, relative to the formation of a ministry, were at an end; at the same time, he begged leave to correct a mistake into which some honorable members had fallen, concerning the actual acceptance of office by his grace: matters, he assured them, had never reached that point.

The lords had no sooner met on Thursday, than the duke of Wellington rose, and proceeded to give, what he called an explanation of his conduct during the last ten days; after which, lord Lyndhurst also entered on his explanation, in which he complained bitterly of being calumniated by the periodical press, which now reigned paramount over the legislature and the country. In allusion to a charge made against him in the other house by sir Francis Burdett,—that, by obeying the commands of his sovereign, ‘he had been guilty of a gross dereliction of duty as a judge,’—he denied the assertion: the honorable baronet ought to have known, that, as a judge, he was a member of the privy council; and not only bound to give his majesty advice when called on, but voluntarily to tender it when he saw the throne or country in peril. Earl Grey said, he would not by one word add to the irritation that prevailed among peers on the opposition benches: it was for them to determine, what sacrifices of former opinions, of repeated declarations, and of recent pledges,

they were prepared to make: it was not his wish to impute to them improper motives, to lay down any standard of duty, to impose on them any rule of political consistency or good faith; but he could not help expressing surprise, that on an occasion like the present, when the house and the public expected a temperate explanation of recent proceedings, in which the noble duke and baron had been engaged, they should have indulged in violent party invective against the bill and ministers. He proceeded to justify his own conduct on the subject of reform, to support which was his only motive for entering on office: he repeated his former assertion,—that reform, to be satisfactory, must be extensive;—and this he thought sufficiently proved by the admission even of its most strenuous opponents: he then discussed at large the motion made by lord Lyndhurst; as well as the charge of the duke of Wellington,—that ministers had abandoned the king; and after expressing a strong sense of his majesty's kindness toward him and his colleagues, he concluded by declaring, 'that his continuance in office must depend on his conviction of his own ability to carry into full effect the bill on their lordships' table, unimpaired in its principle, and all essential details.' The cheering which followed this speech lasted for a considerable time after his lordship had sat down: many peers then rose in succession to exonerate themselves from the imputation of having participated in late negotiations with the duke and lord Lyndhurst; after which, the order of the day for a farther consideration of the bill was discharged; and the house adjourned.

On Friday, the re-instatement of earl Grey and his colleagues in their official departments was certified to both houses, when discussions in a very angry tone again took place among the peers; but this announcement stopped another address to the king from the commons, which lord Milton, who had taken a very active part in all the proceedings, was ready to move: the most lively joy appeared to be diffused throughout the kingdom; for innumerable meetings were instantly convened, and congratulatory addresses drawn up,

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

Re-instate-
ment of
ministers.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

thanking ministers for their steady fidelity to the cause of the people, and praising their conduct in the most unqualified terms. On Monday, the lords went into committee, when the inverted order of the schedules, taken up at lord Lyndhurst's suggestion, was adopted; though in a very different spirit from that which was in the mover's mind. Schedule C. was voted, up to the Tower Hamlets, at the first sitting: next day, the Tower Hamlets, on which the question of the metropolitan districts depended, was discussed; but only thirty-six opposition peers were present to vote against ninety-one. On the ground, that, as the bill now stood, the agricultural interest of Lancashire would be utterly helpless, lord Ellenborough wished that county to be divided into three districts, each returning two members; the two southern divisions would thus be manufacturing, and the northern agricultural: but fifteen voices only were in favor of his proposition, while seventy-five adhered to the bill: in fact, about 100 peers had retired, with the duke of Wellington, from the sittings of the house; unwilling either to give their assent to the measure, or to force ministers, by continued opposition, into the necessity of adding numbers to the peerage.

Reform bill
passed.

On Monday, the fourth of June, earl Grey moved the third reading of the bill; when, after a short but spirited struggle, the lord chancellor put the question; and it did not appear for some moments that the house intended to divide; but when the premier went on to move, 'that the bill do pass,' lord Roden remarked, that the third reading had not yet been carried: a division therefore took place, and the numbers reported were, content one hundred and six; non-content twenty-two. After a few verbal amendments had been made, the bill was passed, and ordered back to the commons; when, the amendments of their lordships having been agreed to on the following day, the royal assent was given to it by commission on the seventh of June. The reform bill for Scotland was brought in by the lord

advocate on the twentieth of June; and having met with little opposition in its progress, received the royal assent on the third of August; while that for Ireland was introduced about the same time by Mr. Stanley in a very statesman-like speech, in which he took a review of the measure in all its ramifications, and explained its various bearings. The Irish members clamored for an increase of numbers; but ministers were proof against all their importunities; the whole bill became law on the seventh of August, 1832; and was celebrated by festivals and rejoicings throughout the empire.

CHAP.
LXVII.
1832.

Thus was brought to a conclusion an experiment pregnant with the most important consequences; an experiment, indeed, which shook the fabric of our political constitution to its very foundation, and which would probably have shattered to pieces any other in the world: in our own there happily exists an extraordinary power of adapting itself to alterations; but all reflecting persons must confess that we have gone to the utmost limit of organic change; and every patriotic reformer must be content with what he has now obtained: may a merciful Providence preserve us from universal suffrage, annual parliaments, and vote by ballot; for they would inevitably plunge us down that gulf, in which so many republics have already perished. At present, we are in no danger, while sound sense and good principles pervade the bulk of our community: encouragement also springs up in the mind which considers, that the reform of our constitution arose, not from any sudden impulse or outrageous violence, from civil contests in our streets, or the deposition of a monarch; but from long agitation of the question; from the growth of new interests; and from a fresh distribution of wealth and intelligence: for while our upper ranks reposed in their country mansions, or enjoyed their own exclusive society in the metropolis, the mercantile, manufacturing, and monied classes were advancing with a rapidity which no one could have foreseen; and it is certain that the constitution could not have been maintained without

General reflections.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

admitting them into its privileges: how indeed could the frame of society shift under our feet, without occasioning a shock in our political institutions? Change indeed was strenuously opposed; but the moderate part even of those who strove to prevent it, contented themselves with the artifices of delay or discussion, and a dexterous use of that influence which arises from rank, property, and station: it was only a small knot of insane politicians, who thought of preserving every ancient form of the constitution by force, or of altering the succession, and establishing a military despotism, by the aid of Orange associations: opposition however was in vain; the bill became law; and every prudent person now sees the necessity of yielding obedience to its enactments. Of all the statesmen who resisted this measure, no one has since entered more fully into its spirit, no one has perceived more clearly the necessity of directing its influence by fair and constitutional means, rather than attempting violently to counteract its object or alter its provisions, than sir Robert Peel: for that acute statesman well knows, that if any institution be altered, not by accident or violence, but by a long series of events giving rise to a general conviction of the necessity of alteration,—it never can be re-established in its previous state: accordingly, he has anxiously endeavored, on various occasions, to prevent unnecessary collisions, and to promote a cordial union between the higher classes, and those into whose hands the principal share of political power has now passed: indeed, without such a union, what shall be found to counteract the schemes of democratic ambition?

It would be improper to dismiss this subject without noticing the successful efforts made by that estimable and patriotic nobleman, the marquis of Chandos, to protect the landed interests, and to counteract an overwhelming force of democratic influence, which the reform bill appeared likely to infuse into the British constitution. At his suggestion, a clause was introduced, which extended the right of voting in county

elections to every tenant, who was *bonâ fide* an occupier of lands or tenements liable to an annual rent of fifty pounds: this, as well as a similar right granted to possessors of copyholds of the value of ten pounds per annum, was opposed by several staunch reformers, on the ground of its tendency to convert small counties, or divisions of counties, into a species of nomination boroughs, while it exposed tenants more than ever to the tyranny of landlords: the result however has shown that it was no more than a fair counterpoise to the vast enlargement of town constituencies.

In the mean time, the whig ministers, well knowing that the people would never remain satisfied with the shadow of reform without its substance, used the bill, as it was meant, to effect a very extensive but gradual restoration of other institutions, tainted by corruption, or dilapidated by time; still endeavoring to combine the maintenance of established rights with the redress of real grievances and acknowledged abuses: their conduct, indeed, cannot be more accurately described, than in the words of a leading reformer among themselves. ‘The tories,’ lord John Russell observed, ‘wished that the bill should remain a toy in the hands of the people, without benefit to themselves or their posterity: I wished to see practical improvements, rather than attempts to square our constitution by abstract theory or foreign example;—to see popular influence control and check the exorbitant and corrupt expenditure of the state, renew or purify our institutions, by clearing away their defects, and restoring their original spirit;—to see the interests of all classes weighed, not by the prejudices and partial affections of those who counterfeited the people’s voice, and usurped their inheritance; but by the legitimate representatives of that same people, summoned by the sovereign to uphold a monarchy of which they are the chief support, and to be the image of an enlightened nation whose confidence they enjoy.’

Finally it must be observed, that, as in all human institutions and changes faults and evils are to be found, such may be perceived in the great measure of

CHAP.
LXVII.

1832.

reform. Many complain, that by extending the elective franchise among the lower classes it has opened a wider door to corruption; that by its copious introduction of demagogues into the house of commons, it has debased the tone and character of that assembly; that it delays the progress of all practical business, while members waste weeks and months of each session in harangues delivered solely to please their popular constituencies; and that by closing the entrance into parliament against a variety of interests formerly represented, it too much narrows the sovereign's choice of public servants in the parliamentary offices of state; whilst it resolves all other objects into a fierce and ingrossing struggle between the two great forces of national representation, that of the towns and that of the land. These evils, and it must be confessed that they are such, might have been avoided, if the high tories had not, by rejecting all plans of moderate and salutary reform, driven their opponents to extreme measures: even now we may reasonably hope that they will be modified and changed by time: a large store of good taste and good principles is still left within the walls of St. Stephen's; good examples as well as bad, are catching; with the progress of education the constituencies themselves will change for the better; and their representatives will of course change with them, until the British senate shall not only have resumed its ancient integrity, but, having discarded its dull speeches and immeasurable debates shall have regained that polish which rendered it the great ornament of the civilized world.

During the latter part of the debates on the reform bill, some other important measures were passing through parliament; among which was one to abolish the punishment of death in cases of horse-stealing, and of stealing to the value of five pounds in a dwelling-house. On the twenty-fifth of June, when this bill was in a committee of the house of lords, the earl of Eldon strongly expressed his disapproval of so great a relaxation of our laws; declaring that according to his experience the fear of death very often operated to

prevent the commission of those crimes against which it was directed; and illustrating his opinion by many examples drawn from that experience. On the second of July, the same nobleman was among the unsuccessful supporters of lord Roden's motion for an address to the crown on the state of Ireland; in reply to the plea that the disturbances of that country had existed from early times, he observed—'that the law ought to have been put in force against them by government: to leave matters of such a kind to be settled by the progress of good sense and calm reflection was, in critical circumstances, an unsafe mode of proceeding; for if calm good sense had been absent for so many centuries, it was not very likely to return in time to be of service now: the common law must become utterly useless, if, before it could be brought into action, it were necessary to wait and see the mischief done. He was convinced that the resistance to payment of tithes began in a conspiracy, which, if prosecuted with vigor, might easily be destroyed.' These observations were directed against the dictates of lord chancellor Plunkett, as to conspiracies, the common law of the country, and the neglect of applying that law. On the twenty-sixth of July, and on the seventh of August, with reference to lord Brougham's bill for abolishing chancery sinecures and increasing the chancellor's retiring pension from £4000 to £5000 a-year in consideration of the patronage thus cut off, lord Eldon briefly vindicated his own conduct in the *distribution* of patronage, and objected to the haste with which so extensive a change was pressed forward; yet at that moment the grave was scarcely closed over the remains of a son on whom this grand objector to changes had conferred *six* of the most lucrative offices under the great seal, four in possession and two in reversion; enabling him to live in splendor, as a man of pleasure, without any attention to professional cares.¹³

¹³ See Life of Lord Eldon, vol. iii. pp. 171, 186.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

WILLIAM IV. (CONTINUED.)—1832.

General election—State of the continent—Discussion of the slave question—Opening of the first reformed parliament—Bill for the suppression of disturbances in Ireland—Irish church bill—Loan to the clergy of Ireland—Act for the extinction of slavery in the British colonies—Renewal of the Bank charter—Settlement of the East India question—Factory bill—Corporation commission—Foreign politics—Close of the session—Death of lord Grenville—Succeeded as chancellor of Oxford by the duke of Wellington—Opening of the session of 1834—Joint address of the lords and commons—Divisions in the cabinet—Renewal of Irish coercion bill—Earl Grey resigns, and lord Melbourne is created premier—Rejection of the Irish tithes bill by the peers—Grievances of dissenters—Commutation of tithes—Poor-laws amendment act—Debates on agriculture—Shipping interest—Financial statements—Close of the session—Unpopularity of ministers—Dissolution of the cabinet—Administration of sir Robert Peel—Dissolution of parliament—General election—Ecclesiastical commission—Meeting of the new parliament—Election of Mr. Abercrombie as speaker—Defeat of ministers on the address—Orange societies—Malt tax—Dissenters' marriage bill—Irish tithes bill—Defeat of ministers—Resignation of sir Robert Peel, and recall of lord Melbourne's administration—Lord Melbourne's new administration—Adjournment of the house—Several ministers lose their seats—Ministers proceed with caution—Municipal reform—Debates on the subject—Consideration in commons of the bill for regulating the Irish churches—Rejected by the lords—Bill to suspend payment of sums advanced to the Irish clergy—Protest from the Scotch assembly's committee—Orange lodges—Amendment of the reform bill—Motion to admit ladies to the house of commons—Agricultural distress—Whole system of taxation brought under notice—The budget—Canadian affairs—Close of the session; and king's speech—Mr. O'Connell's progress—Cape of Good Hope—Resumption of Canadian affairs—Affairs of foreign nations—Domestic occurrences—Queen's visit to Oxford—Royal visit to Greenwich Hospital—State of our merchant marine.

AFTER the rising of parliament, the grand objects of public attention were the registration of the new constituency under the reform bill, and other preparations for a general election, which, it was understood, was to follow, as soon as the registration was completed: this having been quietly effected, parliament, which had been prorogued by commission on the sixteenth of October, was dissolved on the eighth of December, and the first general election under the new act took place; the writs being made returnable on the twenty-ninth of January, 1833. In regard to the machinery of the bill, it was found to work much more smoothly than its opponents anticipated: even in the most populous places, the polling, when not interrupted by riotous proceedings, was concluded within the two days prescribed by the act; less time and opportunity was allowed for bribery; and the disturbances which used to arise from drunkenness and profligacy now ceased to disgrace our elections; and here was a vast improvement over the old system: in regard to the candidates, there was a great dislocation of old connexions and previous interests: three parties were in the field; first, the ministerialists, anxious, at this time, to consolidate their grand work of reform, and to reap the best fruits which it was calculated to produce; secondly, the tories, who now assumed the appellation of *conservatives*; whose prejudices had been violently assailed, and whose interests and hopes had been rudely blasted: these in the bitterness of disappointment generally coalesced to oppose all the principles of reform, and to support those men who would strive to make them retrograde; lastly, the radicals, or destructives, who were desirous of spurring ministers on much faster and farther than they desired to go: these men not only bound themselves by pledges to distinct propositions, as short sessions, universal suffrage, and vote by ballot; but promised to descend into the minute details of administration, and to wage continual war against what was called the profligate expenditure of government.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1832.
General
election.

The elections generally went in favor of ministerial

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1832.

candidates, or of those who professed adherence to the cause of reform; for in almost every borough success depended on the newly-created electors, who could scarcely refuse their votes to that party, by whose means they had procured their privileges; but in a large proportion of the counties, conservative candidates were returned. In Scotland, the whigs were most successful; for out of fifty-three representatives elected in that portion of the empire, not more than ten or eleven were tories; nor could half that number be accounted radicals: in Ireland, however, ministers could not boast of such decided success; for there agitation was against their cause; Mr. O'Connell having denounced them, even while the reform bill was in progress, as acting with insult and injustice toward Ireland in the measure of change that was meted out to that country. Thus fell that supreme influence of toryism, which had so long predominated in British councils—not because its principles were odious to the people at large; but because its practices had become vicious and corrupt, from having been too long associated with lavish expenditure and grievous taxation, sinecure places, and extravagant pension-lists; because it had felt and expressed too great a sympathy with aristocratic oppression at home, and despotic tyranny abroad; in short, because it had not advanced with the spirit of the age. It will revive, and regain confidence among the people, whenever the whigs shall aid, as they are too much inclined to aid, tyranny of a baser kind, courting the alliance of radicalism, preferring what seems expedient to what is right, and striving to outstrip that spirit of the age, which ought to be treated with caution, as well as observed with respect.

State of the
continent.

Before we conclude the annals of this year, it may be observed, that although not actually at war with any power, our sovereign had become a party to a treaty with the French king, for adopting coercive measures against Holland, and recovering Antwerp from the Dutch. Don Pedro, having landed in Portugal, took possession of Oporto; in which place, after

some slight successes, he was shut up by the Miguelites, who bombarded the town, blockaded the Douro, and placed the invader in a very critical situation. In the east, a quarrel took place between the sultan and Mahomet Ali Pasha of Egypt, which not only threatened serious consequences to the Turkish empire, but occasioned such interference on the part of Russia, as roused the jealousy and vigilance of other European powers: toward the end of June, the British public first learned that it was the intention of ministers to despatch the premier's son-in-law on a special mission to Russia; and much confidence was placed in the integrity and talents of lord Durham, for a mitigation of that cruel lot which hung over the unhappy Poles. The subject was brought before the commons during this session by colonel Evans, member for Rye, who moved, though without success, for a resolution demanding the strict performance of treaties entered into by Russia and other European powers, with regard to Poland. In a long and able speech on this question, the gallant officer, adverting to the treaty of 1815, of which the treatment of Poland was so striking an infraction, noticed the general conduct of the Russian government, 'as one series of unjustifiable aggressions on other nations, of territorial aggrandisement, and violations of national law and faith. The contest with Persia,' he said, 'and the subsequent war with Turkey, were instances of this aggression; and the result of both was territorial aggrandisement. Russia, as it was well known, was the principal moving power in preventing the establishment of a constitutional government in Naples, Piedmont, and other states of Italy; and it was equally well known, that chiefly through her influence France sent an unjustifiable expedition to Spain: next came the atrocious case which they were then discussing, on which it was not necessary for him to dwell.' This part of the subject, however, was taken up by that ready and consistent friend of humanity, sir Francis Burdett, in a speech worthy of the best days of British eloquence: he contended, in opposition to sir Charles

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1832.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1832.

Wetherell, who thought no treaty had been broken by Russia,—that the independence of Poland would have been a much worthier object of English interference, than that of Belgium, about which so much had been said and done.

On all these questions, it must be confessed, that effectual interference in the affairs of other nations is an object of great delicacy as well as difficulty: still, it is a proud boast for Great Britain, that there is one spot within her limits, where the sentiments of freedom and humanity may be spoken loudly enough to reach the ears of a tyrant; where his atrocities may be openly denounced; and his barbarities recorded for the detestation of mankind, until their continued perpetration be no longer tolerated.

Another interesting subject, relating to the Germanic states, was brought before the commons by Mr. H. L. Bulwer; who moved for an address to the king, requesting his majesty to exert his influence with the diet, in opposition to the course which that body was then pursuing: in doing this, the honorable member traced an outline of the political history of the Germanic confederacy, from its free government, suited to the genius of the times, to its termination with the victories of Austerlitz and Jena, when the principle of oppressing small states to aggrandise the larger was first avowed and practised. The defeat of Napoleon in his Russian campaign gave to Germany an opportunity of casting off a yoke which had been reluctantly borne: Russia and Prussia then appealed to her former free constitutions, the restoration of which was distinctly promised, when the Germanic states rose *en masse*; and the battle of Leipsic, with the downfall of the French power, speedily followed. By the second article of the congress of Vienna, the promises of Russia and Prussia were respected, and the rights of every class in the nation were solemnly guaranteed, with the sole opposition of Wurtemberg. Having then dwelt at some length on the part taken by this country in these affairs, he came to the late protocol of the diet, the chief object of which was to render the repre-

sentative bodies of the several states useless, by relieving their despotic princes from every embarrassment which an efficient control by such assemblies might create, and to protect Austria and Prussia against the influential example of popular institutions. 'The sovereigns of those two countries,' said Mr. Bulwer, 'are willing to give just so much constitutional liberty to Germany, as will not allow its writers to write, its professors to teach, its chambers to vote taxes, make speeches, or propose resolutions; whilst every state shall be so inviolate, so independent, that, with or without the invitation of its sovereign, a deputation of Austrian or Prussian hussars may be sent to keep it in order.' Then came the question for consideration;—was it politic for England, under such circumstances, to interfere? Our situation, as it appeared to him, rendered it incumbent on us to express an opinion, at least, in favor of the German people; or we must be thought to take part with their rulers: though he would never recommend a hasty and foolish interference with foreign states; yet he would not consent that England should be a cipher in the political combinations of Europe, looking with indifference on the continent, and thinking that no changes there can possibly affect her: for if there be any one thing more than another which immediately affects British interests, it is the fate of Germany: unite that country under a good government, and it is at once a check on the aggrandisement of France and the ambition of Russia; leave it as it is, and it becomes a tool in the hands of the one, or a prey to the other. After contrasting the effects of the German armies, acting under Austria and Russia, against France, with those resulting from the real confederation of the people, Mr. Bulwer concluded with his motion for an address; but lord Palmerston, though he complimented the honorable member for his zeal and ability, dissented from his conclusions; and was unwilling to believe, that the governments alluded to would be so impolitic as to put down free constitutions.

A remarkable discussion took place in August at

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1832.

Liverpool; which, of all towns in our empire, was intitled to notorious distinction in the encouragement of the slave trade, and in the large profit which it had drawn from so infamous a traffic: yet a public disputation was held this year in the amphitheatre of that town, and in the presence of more than 8000 persons, respecting the justice and expediency of an early and total abolition of colonial slavery. Mr. Thompson, who was the agent of an anti-slavery society in London, laid before his audience the prominent evils of this system, in twenty-six heads; and was replied to by the noted Peter Borthwick, the ostensible organ of the West-India planters, who boldly denied that any of the circumstances, enumerated by his antagonist as evils, were really such, with one exception.¹ This disputation is said to have excited an extraordinary degree of interest among all parties, and to have been listened to with a patience and forbearance highly deserving commendation: the champion of slavery however was thought to have prejudiced his cause by attempting to defend the most vulnerable points; by which he gave to his opponent an opportunity of exposing in detail all its evils, and creating in the public mind a feeling, which it should have been the especial aim of the West Indian party to avoid;—that of an utter abhorrence of slavery, with a consequent indifference to any claims for compensation, in case of its abolition. The advocates of humanity, however, were highly gratified, by finding the intire system generally condemned in a town, where, only a few years before, it had been most strongly patronised; and where the highest mercantile classes were intimately connected with its odious details.

In this year England and France lost two men, whose literary and scientific fame had filled the whole civilized world. Sir Walter Scott died on the twenty-first of September, aged sixty-one; and baron Cuvier on the fifteenth of May.

A short time before the close of last session, Mr.

¹ This was the tearing asunder of the nearest and dearest ties of nature; and the rapid decrease of the slave population, which even Mr. Borthwick allowed was going on at the rate of seven and a half per cent. annually.

Manners Sutton had announced his intention of retiring from the arduous duties of speaker, which he had executed with much dignity and honor, during sixteen years: an act also had passed, granting him a pension of £4000 per annum, with a reversion of £3000 to his son; but he had not been advanced to the peerage, although such a mark of favor is usually bestowed on those who have occupied the chair of the house for a long period, and with distinguished applause: he had been returned one of the members for the university of Cambridge at the general election; and ministers, having obtained his consent to be put in nomination, resolved to support his pretensions to the office of speaker in the new parliament: they thought that the present constitution of the house rendered the aid of an experienced guide particularly necessary, and that they could gain for themselves the praise of economy; since the country would only have to pay the salary of a speaker actually filling the chair, instead of being also burdened with the pension of a retired officer: on the other hand, the more violent reformers resolved to oppose the election of Mr. Sutton, on the score of his politics, and to make out that no money would be saved; as they held that he would be intitled both to his salary and to his pension. When parliament therefore met, on the twenty-ninth of January, Mr. Hume moved, that Mr. Littleton, one of the members for Staffordshire, should occupy the chair; considering it a matter of the highest importance, that the speaker should concur generally in the political sentiments entertained by a majority of members: he was seconded in his motion by Mr. O'Connell, who denounced the ministerial plan as 'another instance of paltry truckling,' and protested against this relapse into toryism.

On the other side, lord Morpeth moved, and sir Francis Burdett seconded the motion, that Mr. Manners Sutton should take the chair; insisting on the admitted fact of his superior qualification, as well as the candid and impartial conduct which he had observed during the late political struggles: it was also shown by the great law officers of the crown, that he

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1833.

Opening
of reformed
parliament.

would have no claim to his retiring annuity, together with his salary; and a division of the house gave him a triumphant majority of 241 votes against 31.

On the fifth of February, the first session of the new parliament was opened by the king in person; who, in his speech, took a comprehensive view of our foreign and domestic relations, in which the affairs of Holland and Belgium, the approaching termination of the charters of the Bank and the East India company, the temporalities of the church, and the state of Ireland, rent by the struggles of contending parties, were prominently introduced. In the house of lords the address was voted unanimously; a slight discussion only being elicited by the sentiments of lord Aberdeen and the duke of Wellington, against the foreign policy of government, especially that regarding Portugal and Holland. In the house of commons the case was different; for a part of the royal speech, which pointed at the adoption of extraordinary measures to repress that insubordination prevailing in Ireland, which defied all laws, excited violent indignation among a large portion of the Irish members, and produced a furious philippic from Mr. O'Connell; by whom the address was designated as a 'bloody, brutal, unconstitutional document.' It was, he said, nothing more than he expected—a declaration of civil war; such a declaration as this country once put forth against America, though she had reaped from it nothing but discomfiture and disgrace: after seven centuries of oppression, there was still to be a call for blood in Ireland. Having gone through a long statement of grievances, Mr. O'Connell declared, 'that all the outrages, which were at the present time perpetrated in Ireland, must be laid at the door of the whigs; whom he accused of having violated the treaty of Limerick, and of being at all times the bitterest enemies of his country: finally, he called on them to put down the cry already raised for repealing the union, by doing justice to Ireland, and thus showing that a repeal was unnecessary.' Mr. Stanley answered this speech in a strain of caustic severity, which was

never forgiven by the agitators or their leader; and lord Althorp, admitting that it was the duty of parliament to remove from the Irish people every just grievance, and declaring that the present government intended to do so, as far as lay in their power, justly asked, if it was not a grievance, that neither property nor life was secure in that country? and, whether this evil ought not first to be removed? Many radical members, however, spoke strongly against all coercion; declaring, that they would not join ministers in measures tending to create a civil war; Mr. Bulwer also told them, that the independent representatives of the people in that house, 300 new members, allied to no old party, and attached to no superstitious observance of whig names, could not, night after night, hear grievances stated by the Irish members, which received no other answers except demands for soldiery, without dropping off, in serious defection, from the ministerial majority. The debate was carried on by adjournments four days, to the eighth of February; when O'Connell's amendment, for a committee of the whole house on the address, was supported by only 40 votes against 428: from this period, however, the time of the house became more and more occupied with the complaints of Irish agitators, and the enthusiastic struggles of their chief for justice to his country, until the regular business of parliament became seriously interrupted: beside all this, the overwhelming quantity of attempted legislation, in consequence of the new constitution of the house of commons, rendered an alteration in the times of sitting absolutely necessary; so that, on the motion of lord Althorp, it was carried, that the house should meet, three days of the week, from twelve to three o'clock, for the transaction of private business; and two days, for the reception of petitions.

A coercion bill, for the suppression of disturbances in Ireland, was brought before the lords by earl Grey, and carried without opposition; for the conservative, or anti-ministerial peers, thought that the only fault of government lay, in not having proposed such a measure sooner: but it had to struggle through a more

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1833.

Irish coercion bill.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1833.

stormy course in the lower house; where O'Connell gave notice, that he would move a call of members for the twenty-seventh of February, and repeat it, whenever he perceived any relaxation of its effects, so long as the bill was before them: he taunted ministers, likewise, with the delay which, as he insinuated, was interposed against their remedial measures; reminding them, that there was another house, through which they might be unable to carry a redress of grievances, whatever was the unanimity with which it enacted measures of coercion;—a house, where 'any proposal, springing from malignant hatred of Ireland, was sure to pass.' Mr. Stanley justly denied the necessity of remedial and repressive measures going on together; but declared, that if ministers found themselves unable to carry both, they would resign office.

On the twenty-seventh, the house having been called over, lord Althorp moved the first reading of the bill; ministers having waited to the last moment, in order to ascertain the possibility of restoring order by the ordinary administration of the laws. After expounding at length the evils which afflicted Ireland, and explaining the provisions of this bill as calculated to repress them, his lordship declared, that it had no reference to the collection of tithes, or any other individual purpose, except the maintenance of social order: it was, however, met by an amendment from Mr. Tennyson, for a fortnight's delay; in which ministers might, by a select committee, or otherwise, satisfy the house that dangers really existed, and could by no other means be effectually warded off. A vehement debate ensued, which was carried on for six days, and closed by a speech of remarkable energy from Mr. O'Connell; but, on a division, the first reading of the bill was carried by a majority of 466 to 89; a preponderance, which seemed to promise an easy passage through its other stages; especially, as the discussion, which generally accompanies the second reading, had been elicited by the first: when, however, the order of the day for the second reading was moved on the eighth of March,

Mr. Hume opposed it in a violent speech, denouncing the apostacy of ministers: on some matter of form, the second reading was then put off till the eleventh, and carried, after a warm debate, by 363 to 84. Notwithstanding this overwhelming majority, swelled by the conservative party lending their support to government, the progress of this bill through committee, up to the twenty-second of March, was a series of conflicts; and so many members, in voting for its principle, declared that they did not mean to support all its provisions, that ministers found it prudent to alter several enactments; especially those relating to courts-martial: after a few more divisions, the bill was read a third time, and passed, on the twenty-ninth of March; when it was sent back to the upper house, for their concurrence in the alterations made by the commons. Though much dissatisfaction was expressed by several conservative peers, especially with the proviso, that no district should be proclaimed because tithes were not paid in it, as likely to operate in preventing the payment of tithes altogether, the bill was finally passed: on the tenth of April, the lord lieutenant issued a proclamation, suppressing the association of Irish volunteers; after which he applied the provisions of the act to the county and city of Kilkenny, with good effect; while several illegal societies and political clubs being suppressed, the list of outrageous offenders against the laws decreased throughout the country. The late discussions had produced many personal conflicts in debate between the Irish secretary and O'Connell, as well as the more devoted of his adherents; by whom Mr. Stanley was regarded with sentiments of bitter hostility: this arose, not more from the energy and effect with which that gentleman repelled the attacks of repealers, than from a supposition, that he was more determined, than some of his colleagues were suspected to be, to surrender no portion of the revenues of the Irish protestant church: Mr. Stanley therefore consulted his own tranquillity, by accepting, at this time, the office of secretary for the colonies,

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1833.

vacated by viscount Goderich, who was made lord privy seal, and advanced a step in the peerage by the title of earl of Ripon. Sir John Cam Hobhouse now became Irish secretary.

The severity of a coercion bill for Ireland, is often met by observations which are only suitable to such a bill if it were proposed for England; no consideration being given to the peculiar character of the Irish people, and the state of society, so different from that of the sister kingdom, where tranquillity can be preserved without the aid of extraordinary statutes and penalties. Great Britain is driven to seek corn abroad, though Ireland might by good management double its produce: but the peasantry will not, or under their peculiar circumstances cannot, cultivate the soil as they ought; nor will they suffer others to do so: and if the stranger introduces capital and skill into the country, some of them will be found to murder him; whilst others look on the act with indifference or approval. It is said therefore, that, although no system of severity by itself alone will be sufficient to set matters right, yet no amendment can be introduced without it; and that we must not suppose that strictness and severity in Irish government are identical with tyranny, or unkindness toward the people. From the different modes of thinking and acting, the same sort of laws which suit the English will not suit the Irish; for the general effect of any law is dependent on the previous habits and prevailing character of those to whom it is applied. *Quid leges sine moribus vane proficiunt?* If it be asked whether by coercive acts the Irish can be taught to respect and love the laws? it is answered, that by no earthly means can they be made to love that mild but continual restraint in which the practical operation of the British laws consist: what the Irishman loves is the extreme of idleness, and what he will patiently endure is the opposite extreme of personal restraint: it is not his nature to enjoy a middle state: he does not so estimate the value of regulated liberty, that for its sake he will consent to endure the continual presence of moderate control: this is conformable to

the Saxon, but not to the Celtic character: legislation cannot change the natural constitution of human races; policy may mix them; and after a length of time may obliterate or neutralise their respective characteristics: but this has not been effected in Ireland; and as the national disposition is essentially different from that of the English, it is idle to suppose that the same laws will work similarly upon both.

There may be much truth in such observations: but at all events, active exertions on the part of government to ameliorate the condition of the people, ought quickly to follow the imposition of severe restrictions: sooner or later the subject must be grappled with; for while the people exist in a state of physical destitution, diversified only by periodical famine with its attendant mortality, and the landlords are exporters of that food for which they grind the faces of a starving population, driving up rent to the highest pitch by competition, and ejecting the miserable occupants by thousands if they are unable to pay it—while these practices go on, coercion will be used in vain. Repeal of the union, and hatred of the protestant establishment, are not the roots of these evils, though they may be national sentiments, and expressive signs of irritation: until landlords find that there are some rights on land distinct from their own, and equally sacred; until laws are adapted for the nation; until legislation regulates such rights as militate against all moral and physical improvement in such a country as Ireland, tenants may be ejected, but intruders will have their brains knocked out; and a shot will be taken at landlords and magistrates who offend against that unwritten code which no act of parliament can change. And after all, what makes and secures property? Is it not the law? does not almost every bill which passes through parliament interfere with its rights? does not all taxation invade them? Is property in land any thing more or less than a social compact for rendering the soil more subservient to the well-being of the community? and is there any thing less than this, which is likely to secure the tranquillity, and possibly the safety, of our empire?

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1833.

anything else which is likely to reconcile multitudes of Irishmen to the ancient confiscation of their lands, and prevent a continual agitation for their recovery? A restraining government therefore would be wise in attending to the physical wants of the population: for until these, and means of permanent supply be obtained, the curfew laws will not be able to keep agitators, incendiaries, and assassins in bed at night; while the same people, if well fed, though they may strive for a local parliament and a church of their own, will at all events conduct their agitation peaceably.

Irish
church bill.

In carrying on their measures for tranquillising Ireland, ministers had uniformly admitted, that grievances existed which ought to be redressed; and had declared a readiness to propose expedients for that purpose: at the head of these had always been placed the Irish established church, standing in the unpopular predicament of possessing large revenues, whilst a majority of the people belonged to a hostile faith, the clergy of which had once been possessors of that opulence: the object of the repealers was to pare down these revenues, while they disclaimed any wish of seeing them bestowed on their own clergy; but others, and those not Irishmen, regarding every religious establishment as an evil, considered the property of the church as a fund which might be seized for what they called purposes of the state. Ministers resolved to take a middle course between such extremes, conceding much, while they retained what might be considered equal to the wants of the establishment: accordingly, on the twelfth of February, lord Althorp opened in the lower house those measures which government proposed with regard to the Irish church; the total revenues of which, after investigation, were found not to exceed £800,000 per annum. On these ecclesiastical funds, it was intended, after abolishing first fruits, to impose a tax, varying according to the value of livings and bishoprics, from five to fifteen per cent.; from the operation of which, however, all livings under £200 per annum were to be exempted; while the large revenues of the primate, and the bishop of Derry, were to be reduced

respectively to the amount of £10,000 and £8000 a year: the sum thus collected was to be applied, under commissioners, to the abolition of church cess; the augmentation of poor livings and building of glebe houses; the division of ecclesiastical unions; and the erection of churches: with respect to the offices of deans and chapters, it was proposed, wherever they were unconnected with the cure of souls, to abolish them altogether, or attach them to such cure; with regard to livings, where no duty had been done for the last three years, to suspend the appointment of ministers at the discretion of the commissioners; also, to abolish ten bishoprics, and annex the vacated sees to certain of those that were preserved: lastly, came the lands attached to bishoprics; and the chancellor of the exchequer laid down this principle,—that if, by the act of parliament to be introduced, any new value was given to benefices, that new value, not belonging properly to the church, might be immediately appropriated to the exigences of the state: he believed that £500,000 a year was the value of all Irish episcopal lands to the lessees or tenants, though the bishops did not receive much more than £100,000: by a different mode of granting leases, his lordship showed that a sum of near £3,000,000 might be acquired for the state, without any diminution of income to the bishops; and he concluded with moving for leave to bring in a bill, to alter and amend the laws relating to the established church in Ireland.

The plan thus opened by lord Althorp was calculated to produce hostility from two opposite quarters;—from the conservative members of opposition, who detested its principle, which they thought destructive to the interests of the church; and from the economists, radicals, and repealers, in whose opinion it left too much to the church untouched: it was clear, however, that these different kinds of opposition could not endanger the success of the bill in the house of commons; for ministers were sure to be joined by one of the parties in resisting any amendment proposed by the other. While sir R. Inglis and Mr. Goulburn stigma-

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1833.

tised the measure as tending to destroy protestantism in Ireland, most of the Irish members approved the plan, as far as it went: O'Connell, however, characterised the estimate of Irish church revenues as 'a base delusion;' and the design of government as one which went to 'relieve no grievance, except church cess; not even suspending the war against the poor man's pigs and tenth potato. Why then,' he added, 'did I, the other evening, so warmly approve the noble lord's measure? Because it recognises an admirable principle, which he cannot now retract; that where there are no spiritual wants, there is to be no receiver of tithes and church rentals.'

A month elapsed before this bill was brought in, and read, for the first time, on the eleventh of March: in its passage through the house, it occasioned much discussion; and on the motion of Mr. Stanley, that clause was altered which appropriated the sum of £3,000,000 to the exigences of the state: 'he was aware,' he said, 'that a strong feeling existed, both within and without the house, against the alienation of church property; and therefore he proposed, that the sum alluded to should be paid into the hands of the ecclesiastical commissioners, to be applied to the same purposes as the other funds with which they were entrusted.' This alteration, though stigmatised by O'Connell as the basest act which a national assembly could sanction, was carried by 280 votes against 148: beneficed clergymen also, in present possession of their livings, were to be exempted from the graduated tax, which was only to affect their successors: the provision, which empowered the commissioners to suspend appointments to benefices, where divine worship had been intermitted three years, was strongly, though unsuccessfully, resisted as bad in principle, and counteracting the expansive power and progress of protestantism in Ireland. On the eighth of July, the bill was read a third time, and passed, by a majority of 274 to 94.

It was the upper house, however, in which the most serious opposition was expected; since there existed

among the peers a majority capable of defeating ministers on any occasion which they might consider expedient; and their leader lord Eldon, when a petition was presented against its enactment, in the beginning of April, had declared, that 'he would oppose it to the last of his life and the utmost of his power; for he thought it adverse to every established principle of government, and full of spoliation:' yet this majority, like the minority in the lower house, contained many individuals willing that large concessions should be made to the spirit of the times; and impressed with an opinion, that the more popular form which the constitution had lately assumed, rendered resistance unwise, where it did not appear to be demanded by the very principles of that constitution.

The bill having been read a first time *pro forma*, the second reading was fixed for the seventeenth of July; and on the fifteenth, sir J. Wrottesly proposed a call of the house of commons, to promote the success of this measure, as that of the reform bill had been ensured; by putting the commons under arms, as it were, at the critical point of its progress: the motion, however, was strongly deprecated, as tending to embarrass ministers; who declared, that their official existence would depend on the success which this bill obtained. To the astonishment of the house, O'Connell, who had voted against its third reading, insisted vehemently that sir J. Wrottesley should persist in his motion; declaring, that, although no man could approve less of the bill than he did, yet the dignity of that house required them to resist any attempt of the lords to keep back even that little pittance of church reform which it contained: the motion was thus pressed to a division, but lost by a majority of 160 to 125.

The debate on the second reading of the bill in the lords was continued by adjournment to the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth of July; and it was passed, after an animated discussion, by 157 votes against 98. In the committee, several amendments were carried, and others successfully resisted; but

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1833.

one having been agreed to on the clause respecting a suspension of appointments to benefices,—that in all such cases, the bishop of the diocese should be intitled to act as a member of the board, if not one already,—the archbishop of Canterbury farther moved, that the revenue of the suspended benefice be applied to the building or repairing of the church and glebe-house belonging to such benefice; or, if they should not require it, that it be then paid into the ecclesiastical fund. This proposition, though opposed by ministers, was carried by a majority of two votes; when earl Grey adjourned the committee, for the purpose of considering what was expedient to be done;—a sort of intimation, that it would be a question for ministers, whether they ought not to throw up the bill, and resign office: on due reflection, however, his lordship did not think this alteration affected the general efficacy of the bill so strongly, as to justify him in abandoning a measure, which he considered essential to the connexion of two kingdoms, to the safety of the people and church of Ireland, and to the general interests of the community. When the report was brought up, a few more slight alterations were admitted; the bill was passed on the thirtieth of July, by a majority of 135 to 81; and on the second of August, the commons agreed to the amendments of the lords; Mr. O'Connell observing, that they had not made the bill much worse than they found it; and protesting against its being viewed in any other light, than as the first instalment of a debt due to Ireland.

Another measure, connected with that country, arose from the difficulty of collecting tithes; and a resolution was passed, that exchequer bills, not exceeding £1,000,000, be issued for advancing under certain conditions, arrears of tithes due for 1831 and 1832, subject to a deduction of twenty-five per cent.; and the value of tithes for 1833, subject to a deduction of fifteen per cent., to any persons intitled to, and desirous of receiving such advances: the amount advanced was to be included in the tithe composition, so as to be repaid in the course of five years by half-

yearly instalments: this plan was strongly opposed, principally on the ground that the money would never be repaid; since repayment was still to depend on a collection of tithe, which never would succeed: the pretended loan, it was said, would be converted into a gift; and England, beside paying its own tithe, would be likewise paying that of Ireland. The grand jury and jury bills also were subjects of great importance in the affairs of so distracted a country; for none but those acquainted with the jobbing and malversation of an Irish grand jury, could have conceived the abuses attending, and incidental to, their presentments; nor could the partiality displayed in the selection of a petty jury, and the intimidation of witnesses, easily have been surpassed: two commissions also were issued; one for inquiring into the corporations of Ireland, and the other for investigating the state of its laboring classes:

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1833.

On the subject of West Indian slavery, at the commencement of this session, the minds of reflecting persons were fixed with intense anxiety; nor could any one doubt that it would be brought under the consideration of a reformed parliament, when he observed the zeal of its opponents, and the hold which it had taken on the public: the excited hopes and growing intelligence of the slave population rendered its final settlement, at no distant period, inevitable; whilst every day of postponement was fraught with augmented danger: yet the extent of this subject, and the interests which it involved, as well as the conflicting principles and prejudices to be encountered, were sufficient to have appalled any set of men, engaged with so many other important subjects: ministers, however, did not shrink from the arduous task; and the result was an act providing for the extinction of slavery in the British colonies on the first of August, 1834: nor, while humanity was thus consulted, was justice neglected; since the same act provided that a sum of £20,000,000 should be advanced to government by way of loan, to be distributed among the proprietors of slaves as a compensation for the loss of

Abolition
of slavery
in the
colonies.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1833.

service. But had this act merely granted emancipation to the slave and compensation to the proprietor, it might have been satisfactory to those whose personal and pecuniary interests were directly concerned; yet it would not have been safe: it was absolutely necessary that some plan should be devised, for preventing the emancipated slave from relapsing into the condition of a savage; and for obviating the great injury which would accrue to the West India planter, as well as to the trade and revenue of this country, by the immediate and total cessation of slave labor: for these purposes, it was provided, that every negro should, immediately on his emancipation, become an apprentice to his late master for a period not exceeding six years, under an obligation of working forty-five hours in the week; but that he should not be subjected to vexatious enactments, or corporal punishment, degrading him in his own estimation; whilst he was to be undisturbed in his worship and instruction, his evidence to be received, and his family respected: by these arrangements, a moderate supply of labor was ensured to the proprietor; while time was given for the enactment of such laws and regulations as different communities might require, as well as for training up the emancipated slave to the duties of a free citizen: the details of this plan were properly left to the local experience of colonial legislatures; an opportunity also being afforded to them of anticipating, by laws of their own, the enactment of the British parliament, and of acquiring the gratitude and confidence of their slave population, by spontaneously conferring on them the blessings of freedom: on one subject alone ministers felt it necessary to legislate immediately and decisively; removing all restrictions on the teachers of christianity in the colonies, except such as exist in the mother country. It only remains to add, that, in order to superintend the due execution of the proposed plan, and ensure both to masters and apprentices an impartial administration of the laws which were to regulate their mutual relations, it was resolved to send out from this country gentlemen to act as special

magistrates, unconnected with local prejudices, and independent of colonial influence: thus commenced, in a truly christian spirit, one of the grandest experiments ever yet attempted; one of the noblest acts of legislation that ever recommended a nation to the protection of Divine Providence.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1833.

During no session of any preceding parliament, did the interests of trade and commerce receive greater attention; nor was it without extreme pleasure that practical men saw a reformed house of commons adopting, and even extending, those enlightened principles of policy, which, for some years, had prevailed in our legislature: that period of commercial distress, which lasted during the agitation of the reform bill, was gradually wearing away; and with the prospect of a permanent liberal government, trade appeared steadily increasing: the industry of the country was in full activity; and though the profits of capital were much less than during the feverish excitement of war, yet their general amount was larger, and their advantages were spread over a more extended surface. Two legislative enactments were at this time adopted, which must be considered as bearing on our commercial prosperity in a greater degree, than any which, during a long series of years, have engaged the attention of parliament;—the renewal of the Bank charter, and that of the East India company. With regard to the first of these measures, which involved many intricate details, and was the subject of long and repeated discussions, its chief provisions were;—a monthly publication of the Bank accounts; the repayment of a portion of its capital; a partial repeal of the usury laws which impeded its action; an annual payment of £120,000 to government in return for privileges conceded; its notes made a legal tender, except at the Bank itself, or its branches; a quarterly return of the amount of circulation of all other banks; and certain regulations for the improvement of joint-stock banks, among which the power of obtaining a charter from the crown was not the least.

Renewal
of bank
charter.

A settlement of the East India question, and of the

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1833.
East India
question.

China trade, was surrounded with peculiar difficulties; but these, by diligence and attention, were all obviated; and the measure introduced for this purpose was, with some slight modifications, adopted by parliament. One of the greatest advantages gained by the public was that which opened a rich field for the enterprise and industry of our merchants, by destroying the monopoly of trade in tea; while facilities for conducting this branch of commerce, together with a considerable relief from taxation on what has become one of the necessities of life, was given by a subsequent bill for regulating the importation of that article: the long and complicated account between commerce and territory is now settled in a compromise approved by moderate men on all sides: the proprietors of India stock, having become creditors of the country placed under their care, will henceforth have a strong interest in improving its revenues by the maintenance of good order, and the encouragement of industry: the pernicious union of imperial and economical functions in one body is at an end: in the constitution of the board of control changes have been made, which, while they increase its efficiency, diminish the parliamentary influence of ministers: every office under the company has been thrown open to British subjects without distinction; and probably the whole of India will soon invite European enterprise and European capital.

It is cheering to imagine not only what prolific sources of wealth and prosperity will be thrown open, but what means of happiness will be developed for the inhabitants of this great country when its cruel and iniquitous governments shall be wholly subdued, and all its merchants and agriculturists, its traders, and peasants, shall be released from the dread of violence, and brought into close contact with humane and polished rulers, who, far from envying them their possessions, will feel an honest pride in beholding their increase. There is one truth connected with our Indian empire, which is at length become apparent—that we can never govern it as we ought, until we

possess the whole. While we have enemies remaining within the natural boundaries of our dominion, much of our attention must necessarily be occupied in defeating their machinations, while we watch the movements of their disorderly armies, or predatory bands, engendered within their territories, to be the curse of ours. Only when our authority shall be universally recognised, can we concentrate our energies for the amelioration of institutions, the encouragement of industry, and the promotion of commerce. At present an immense army is required, as a kind of police, to prohibit lawless chieftains, little better than robbers, from pillaging and destroying their neighbors; and it is only when such a state of things is ended, that we can betake ourselves to the construction of those vast public works which are the precursors of civilisation. The revenues now consumed on camps, artillery, and munitions of war will then be expended on roads, canals, bridges, tanks, embankments, schools, colleges, and all those subsidiary institutions which accompany British colonists, and appear necessary for the completion of their schemes of happiness. At present the sword is scarcely ever out of our hands: a series of hostilities expensive, harassing, and dangerous, has been the inheritance of all our governors: peace has been but the accidental condition of our oriental empire; and this from no lust of conquest, no ardor for war, but from a stern necessity, opposed to the earnest endeavors of government, both at home and abroad. Yet in all our conquests the general rule of conquest has been reversed: the reign of the strangers, aliens in blood, language, and faith, has been fraught with blessings far beyond any other in these regions: humanity and justice, security of life and property, arts and civilisation, follow the conquering sword, giving an earnest of what may be expected when all is under one extensive and beneficent dominion.

We must not omit to mention, that the commercial laws of the empire were at this time consolidated and

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1833.

brought into one volume; while no efforts were wanting on the part of government to promote in other states the adoption of the same liberal policy which has been found so advantageous to ourselves. A commission of trade was sent to France; and prohibitions on the export of raw silk from that country,—an object declared last year, before a committee of the commons, to be of vital importance to our manufactures,—were at length removed: nor was parliament less active and zealous in its endeavors to ascertain the actual condition of our laboring classes, than in its efforts to improve them: a committee was appointed for this purpose, at the suggestion of the declaimers about distress; and a laborious inquiry into the principal branches of national industry was carried on: in particular, the factory bill was elaborately discussed; and a commission of inquiry appointed, which collected a vast body of valuable information on that subject; so that an act was passed, which not only reduced the daily labor of children, but made provision for their education in a form which invites and admits the co-operation of benevolent persons of all religious sects: inspectors also have since been appointed, for the purpose of giving effect to this measure, and securing to the next generation the advantages of a manufacturing community of increased intelligence and improved morality. Our limits oblige us to pass by the various reforms begun or perfected in the law,¹ as well as the financial measures of the present session: it must, however, be observed, that great relief was given to the country at large, by a reduction of taxation to the amount of £1,545,000; whilst a rigid system of economy was observable in the army and navy estimates of the year:

¹ A bill introduced by lord Wynford to diminish expense and delay in suits at law, of which the principal object was to enable a plaintiff and defendant to examine each other on interrogatories, was rejected through the combined resistance of lords Lyndhurst and Eldon, chiefly arising from the inexpediency of confounding the principles of legal with equitable proceedings. Lord Brougham's local jurisdiction bill was also defeated, chiefly by the strong stand made against it by the high legal authorities. 'I went down yesterday,' says lord Eldon, in reference to this measure, 'to denounce a most abominable law bill of the chancellor; spoke as strongly against it as an old lawyer's mind and body could enable him to speak, and moved to put it off for six months.'

besides, the whole subject of appointments connected with these departments was referred to a committee; and the names of its members gave full warrant for belief that the inquiry would be searching, and the reduction as unsparing as was consistent with the efficiency of the services. Among the most important of the commissions appointed by government, was that for inquiring into the state of corporations, those last holds of tory corruption and abused patronage: no evil, in fact, called more loudly for reform than this: no abuses weighed more heavily on the general mass of the population in municipal towns, than the administration of corporate property, and the undue exercise of powers given for the benefit of the people, but in most instances utterly perverted from their original design. If the representation of the country required alteration; if that had become corrupt from age, misuse, and change of times; every argument, used in furtherance of parliamentary reform, applied with tenfold justice and force to a complete revision and reconstruction of municipal corporations; most of which had become dens of iniquity, the avenues to which were strictly guarded against intruders, whilst their inmates dissipated the revenues of which they were the appointed guardians. Yet, as when the reform bill itself was announced, furious passions again agitated a large portion of the community; and from this wholesome measure the greatest evils were predicted; while the utmost exertions were made to counteract its progress. Connected with this subject, was the change now made in Scotch burghs, where the whole system of self-election was intirely abolished: this flagrant abuse, which was introduced about four centuries ago, under a pretence of avoiding the tumults incidental to popular elections, had long ago produced its natural fruits, in the utter dilapidation of revenue, in a regular series of corruption and embezzlement, and, at length, in the general discontent and indignation of all classes exposed to its influence: in vain, however, had the attention of parliament been called to a system, which was but too agreeable to its own

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1833.

Foreign
politics.

leaders under the old *régime*: the power of corruption was too great to admit of its destruction, till the voice of the people prevailed in a reformed house of commons.

The transactions of our government in its foreign policy this year are too important to be passed over in silence. With regard to the Greek question, the grand object remaining to be accomplished, was to place the nation in a well-defined territory, under an independent government, calculated to secure the respect of foreign powers. When the present administration succeeded to office, they found an agreement entered into by their predecessors with the sultan, by which certain limits were settled for Greece, which would have given to its inhabitants no defensible frontier, but would rather have exposed them to a constant collision with their former oppressors: sir Stratford Canning therefore was despatched to Constantinople to make a more rational arrangement; and that able negotiator was successful in obtaining the consent of the Porte to an amended boundary. Prince Otho of Bavaria, an ignorant, obstinate, unexperienced boy, selected as king of Greece by the three mediating powers, arrived this year in his dominions; and Greece, rescued at so costly a price of blood and treasure from the Ottoman scourge, was subjected to the leaden rule of Bavarian despotism: this scandalous appointment has led to innumerable evils, which still afflict that unhappy country, and tend to embroil all the cabinets which were instrumental in producing them.

The Belgian question, like the Greek, had its origin in events antecedent to the formation of the present government; so that ministers found a course chalked out, which they might modify as they advanced, though they could not retrace steps already taken. When the Netherland revolution first broke forth, the king called on his allies for troops: these were refused; but his next request for the assembling of a conference was granted; and by subsequent acts of that assembly, a principle of separation between the two countries

was established: the task then of the present government was to settle terms on which a separation should take place, so as to provide for the interests and security of all parties: the difficulties encountered arose from the obstinacy of the Dutch monarch, which burdened his subjects with expenses, fully counterbalancing the relief afforded by a division of the public debt between them and the Belgians. The citadel of Antwerp was to be evacuated in fifteen days, by the armistice which his majesty had invoked in November, 1830; but the possession of that fortress enabled him to harass the Belgians, and intercept their trade on the Scheldt; he therefore refused to give it up; so that England and France, failing to obtain co-operation from the other three powers, were obliged to have recourse to force: hence the seige of Antwerp by French troops, and an embargo laid on Dutch vessels by Great Britain. These vigorous measures disconcerted all the calculations of the Dutch monarch, and of his partisans, whether English Tories or continental absolutists; who vented their anger in predictions which utterly failed: the impregnable citadel of Antwerp, which was to have collected the tide of war round its bastions, surrendered in the beginning of this year to marshal Gerard; whilst our embargo, that was confidently declared to be harmless to the Dutch and ruinous to ourselves, produced the convention of the twenty-first of May, by which the Belgian question was totally changed. The king having agreed to accept an unlimited armistice, the principal point of discussion remaining was that of compensations; and Europe was secured against the danger of a general war, resulting from differences between Holland and Belgium: it may, however, be confidently predicted, that this latter state will not escape future disturbances: her liberal party which had achieved the revolution was dispossessed of power after a few years, because the wild and ardent spirits of its members were not in unison with the nations of Europe: unlike France, she did not possess a strong body of influential conservatives inclined to peace as advantageous to agricultural

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1833.

and commercial interests; so, when she had wrested power from the hands of her liberals, she was obliged to throw it into those of her ecclesiastics, as bigoted a body, and as hostile to every species of freedom, as any portion of the Romish church: these men, like the generality of churchmen when they enter on politics, soon began to legislate and to govern in a sacerdotal point of view: their acts, and more especially their peculiar endowment of the University of Louvain, created a revulsion in the public mind, and the liberals began again to anticipate the resumption of power.

This present year also saw the closing prospect of those dreadful calamities which had so long weighed down the wretched people of Portugal: the tyrant Miguel's fleet was captured by our gallant Napier, and the siege of Oporto was raised; a liberating army marched in triumph from the Guadiana to the Tagus; Donna Maria was proclaimed in Lisbon; and a British minister again presented himself at the court of the rightful sovereign. Our government, though strictly adhering to that neutrality which it had imposed on itself, contributed mainly to these successes, by requiring other powers to observe the same line of conduct: taught, however, by experience, it did not trust solely to assurances from the cabinet of Madrid; but prepared itself for all events, by sending a powerful squadron under admiral Parker to the Tagus, with orders to take an active part for Don Pedro, the moment a Spanish force should appear in Portugal to assist the usurper. There can be but little doubt, if a tory government had been established in England,—especially when a motion made in favor of Don Miguel by the duke of Wellington, and the correspondence of his grace, which was published in the journals of the day, are taken into consideration,—that some pretence or other would have been found to let the Spanish army loose, for the purpose of keeping Portugal under subjection to the basest tyrant of modern times: the cause of right, however, triumphed; and the moral effect of this may still be felt. While the attention of Europe was absorbed by events in the west, a sudden

storm arose in the east: the throne of the sultan was first menaced by a rebellious satrap, and next endangered by a protecting ally: but the exertions of the British government, assisted by that of France, enabled the Porte to escape for the present from both those perils; for the Egyptian army of Mahomet Ali retired from Asia Minor, and the Russians left Constantinople. It does not, however appear yet to be in the design of their ambitious government to disturb the present system by new conquests in Europe: desiring only a free transit for her ships from the Euxine to the Mediterranean, Russia is content to abstain from foreign aggressions, until she has annihilated the spirit and very name of Poland, by incorporating its mutilated provinces into her enormous empire: at present, she knows that other nations could recall Poland to political existence; and thus form a barrier, against which the leviathan of the north would rage in vain. Neither does Russia regard with alarm the revolutions which have lately agitated the continent: feeling convinced that within her own frontier the constitutional malady cannot penetrate, she rather views with satisfaction the attention of neighboring states distracted and averted from her ambitious projects in the east. In the mean time, she keeps her eye steadily fixed on Asia Minor and Persia; with a probable longing after the possession of Hindostan. The personal character of her autocrat affects but in a remote degree the policy of her empire: the ambition of Nicholas might possibly be satisfied: but he must be a party, despite of himself, in the plan traced out for the future destinies of his country;—a plan, which seems to be laid out on almost unerring principles; so admirably have they succeeded in operation up to the present hour. A good understanding with Austria may protect western Europe against that mighty power, which, like a thunder cloud in the heavens, fills the beholders with alarm: but we must keep an unceasing watch over its progress in Asia; where already its possession of the whole eastern coast and the Black Sea, its conquests in Circassia, its demonstration on the Persian frontiers, and its proba-

CHAP.
LXVIII.
— 1833.

ble occupation hereafter of Asia Minor, are enough to fill us with lively apprehensions for the future. With France, our relations have continued to afford, with some intermissions, a striking contrast to those exhibited in former periods of history: time was, when the countries imagined themselves natural enemies, and the foes of one became friends of the other: but those days seem happily to be passing away, spite of the detestable war-faction in France and its disgraceful press; whose constant endeavors are exerted to drive their own prudent monarch and his ministers into acts injurious to the honor and interests of Great Britain. Both countries, however, contain numerous individuals of high talent and benevolent views; and in both peace societies are established, comprising many such persons, with some from the highest ranks also, in their lists; whose main object is to promote the principles of good will toward men, which the great author of Christianity came to establish: when these admirable institutions shall have increased sufficiently to bring a strong moral force to bear on their respective governments, then may we expect to see the reign of peace commence upon earth; then will the two greatest and most intelligent nations of the world discover, that they may reap, from friendly intercourse, advantages far beyond any which the most successful war could procure for either. Strange to say, some of the earliest, most enlightened, and most active agents in these praiseworthy institutions, exist among the citizens of the North American republic.

The brief and imperfect outline which has been given of the transactions of this session, is sufficient to show, that in no preceding period of equal length was so much undertaken, or so much accomplished: the spirit of the reform bill was honestly allowed to act in correcting abuses which affected our institutions: while the utmost care was taken, lest the spirit of liberty should be extinguished in the rest of Europe: a great majority in the commons were found to be partisans, neither of ministers nor of opposition, but of good government; and when the session closed, on the

twenty-ninth of August, the king justly observed, in his speech, that 'it was not more remarkable for extended duration, than for the patient and persevering industry, which parliament had displayed in many laborious inquiries, and in perfecting the various legislative measures brought under its consideration.'

CHAP.
LXVIII.
—
1834.

On the twelfth of January, 1834, lord Grenville was released by death from scenes of earthly ambition and political contention; when the university of Oxford, which had so lately ejected one of the two great leaders in the cause of catholic emancipation from his place of representative in parliament, for advocating that cause, now offered the vacant place of chancellor to the other leader, field-marshal the duke of Wellington.

Ille cruce sceleris pretium tulit, hic diadema.

His grace accepted the invitation on the twenty-ninth; was elected without a competitor, and was installed in June following.

On the fourth of February, his majesty opened the session with a speech, in which, among other matters, he alluded to the slavery abolition bill, introduced last year; stating, that the manner in which that beneficent measure had been received throughout the colonies, and the progress made in carrying it into effect by the legislature of Jamaica, afforded just grounds for anticipating the happiest results. Among several important subjects still calling for consideration, he enumerated reports from the commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of municipal corporations, into the administration of the poor-laws, and into the ecclesiastical revenues of England and Wales; by which parliament might be enabled to judge of the nature and extent of existing defects or abuses, and in what manner any necessary corrections might, in due season, be safely and beneficially applied. The chief point in our foreign policy related to the government of Spain: 'on the death of the late king,' said his majesty, 'I did not hesitate to recognise the succession of his infant daughter; and I shall watch with great solicitude the progress of events, which may affect a government,

Opening of
parliament.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1834.

the peace of which is of the first importance to this country, and to the general tranquillity of Europe.'

On the motion for an address in the house of lords, the whole policy of government, domestic and foreign, was vehemently attacked by the duke of Wellington; who felt indignant that Don Miguel had not been recognised by our government as king of Portugal; but he was ably answered by earl Grey. In the commons, amendments were moved by Messrs. Hume and O'Connell; and colonel Evans, while he applauded the system of our neutrality regarding Portugal, expressed his hopes, that the commercial relations, which Prussia was establishing with many German states for the exclusion of British manufactures, would attract the attention of government.

Reform of parliament had not stilled the waves of civil tumult. A meeting of the trade unions of the metropolis was held on the twenty-first of April in Copenhagen-fields, for the purpose of marching in procession to the office of the home department, with a petition in favor of certain offenders who had been convicted at the Dorchester assizes, of administering unlawful oaths: and this procession, consisting of near 30,000 persons in the streets of London, collected vast crowds, and created much alarm. Lord Melbourne the home secretary refused to receive this petition under circumstances of such tumult, and the persons intrusted with it were obliged to retire: but on the twenty-fourth, the petition was presented by a small deputation and laid before the king in the usual manner. After Mr. O'Connell had prepared the way during the previous part of this session, he made his motion to repeal the union between Great Britain and Ireland on the twenty-second of April; declaring that there never existed a greater mistake, than to suppose that England possessed any right of dominion over the latter country. Having maintained, at great length, the incompetency of parliament to pass the act of union, and having detailed the dishonorable means by which it was accomplished, he proceeded to prove, that the financial and legislative terms on which the great

question had been settled, were in their very nature fraudulent and unjust: looking at these circumstances, he dreaded the probable consequences of a continuance of this union; though he thought the connexion between the two countries might still be kept up, on principles of international right and justice, under the British crown: Ireland, he said, had been hitherto governed, not by constitutional law, but in a spirit of despotism; therefore he demanded a restoration of her national legislature. He was answered at great length, and with equal ability, by Mr. Spring Rice; who, having enumerated the manifold advantages gained by Ireland from the union, which had been the source of much commercial prosperity and had released that country from the tyranny of its wealthier classes, declared, that he did not consider this a contest for victory;—a far more valuable stake was at issue: to repeal the union, and at the same time expect to maintain a profitable connexion between the two countries, was contrary to all experience and principles of government: in such a case, constitutional monarchy would be overthrown, and succeeded by a fierce democracy: the people of Ireland were not prepared for a domestic legislature; power would be abused, party spirit would increase in rancor, and the rash measure would be followed by a total subversion of the empire: he moved therefore an address to his majesty, expressing a fixed determination of the commons to maintain inviolate the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland; a determination, to be justified, not only on general grounds, but by reasons of special application to Ireland itself; declaring also, that while that house endeavored to remove all just causes of complaint alleged by the Irish people, it would promote every well-considered measure of rational liberty. A similar view of the subject was taken by sir Robert Peel; who declared, that there were convictions to which the feelings of the heart applied as strongly as the faculties of the mind; and on this point he repeated the exclamation of Mr. Canning: —‘Repeal the union! re-enact the heptarchy!’ The

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

security of our empire depended on the maintenance of that union, without which England would be reduced to the condition of a fourth-rate power, and Ireland to the desolation of a wilderness. Nature herself proclaimed the folly of such a scheme: to preserve the existence of these islands as a leading state in Europe, it was absolutely necessary that they should be governed by one supreme head, and one supreme legislature: their union had now endured thirty-three years; within which period the events of centuries had been crowded, and Great Britain alone, of all European states, remained safe from foreign aggression; her armies joining in one common exertion, and glorying in one common victory: during that period, the legislature had been guided by the wisdom of Pitt and Castlereagh, of Fox and Grattan; while the British army was under the command of Wellington, who, with his back to the sea, on the rock of Lisbon, saw Europe in dismay; but never ceased from his glorious labors till the whole continent was emancipated. The amendment for addressing his majesty was carried by 523 votes against 38 for the original motion; the minority, with a single exception, consisting of Irish members. On the thirtieth of April, the commons, in a conference, communicated their address to the lords; who, in one spirit, unanimously concurred in its sentiments, and ordered the blank, which was purposely left, to be filled up with the words 'lords spiritual and temporal:' it was then presented, as a joint memorial to the king, who expressed, in his answer, the great satisfaction with which he had received the solemn and united declaration of both houses to maintain the union inviolate; his determination to exercise fearlessly and faithfully powers vested in him, for the protection of his subjects against all attempts to produce a division of the realm; and his anxiety to remove all just causes of complaint, as well as to sanction every well-considered measure of improvement.

A very unreasonable share of the time of parliament continued to be taken up by the discussion of Irish affairs, and the disputes of Irish members. In offering

an open and determined resistance to the demand of the agitators for a repeal of the union, ministers carried along with them the sense and feeling of the people: that was a question on which scarcely any man differed from the government, except O'Connell and his adherents; but questions connected with the Irish church stood in a different light. The agitators supported repeal, as a measure tending, not more to perpetuate their own domination, than to secure the downfall of the protestant establishment: many, likewise, who resisted repeal, still demanded changes and curtailments in that establishment, considering it as the principal cause of all the turbulence and misery which afflicted Ireland: others, again, who disliked it, not because it was a protestant, but because it was a religious establishment, inveighed against what they termed an unhallowed connexion between church and state, and the practical injustice of compelling persons of one creed to support the institutions of another; and these were ready to attack, not only the revenues, but the very existence of the Irish church, as a first step toward the destruction of that of England. Union in the cabinet, with a firm determination not to be driven farther than they themselves were inclined to go, might have rendered ministers sufficiently strong to defy such destructive reformers; but on this question the cabinet itself was unfortunately divided: one portion, numerically the strongest, seemed inclined to admit the principle of appropriation, which they had repudiated in the bill of last session, by withdrawing the clause in which it was contained; but the minority, however willing to remove striking and useless inequalities in the distribution of ecclesiastical revenue, and to adopt measures which would prevent irritating collisions in its collection, resisted, on principle, a transfer of it to other purposes; refusing to acquiesce in any proposals for making the protestant establishment dependent on the comparative strength or weakness of the Romish church.

This discordance of opinion, and the impropriety of so soon impugning the settlement of last session,

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1834.

Divisions in
the cabinet.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1834.

would have prevented ministers from voluntarily starting the subject; but it was forced on them by a numerous and clamorous party, which made up in fury and zeal for deficiency in knowledge and discretion; and which declared, that in attempting to shield the Irish church, they were apostatizing from the great principles of reform: when, therefore, Mr. Ward's motion came on, for reducing the temporalities of that church, as exceeding the spiritual wants of the protestant population, a schism took place in the cabinet: ministers, pressed by difficulties on all sides, were anxious to get rid of the proposal by appointing a commission, to inquire into the state of the Irish church: such an expedient, however, necessarily implied, that if facts turned out in a particular way, there would be no longer any opposition to Mr. Ward's principles; and the consequence was, that Mr. Stanley, colonial secretary, and sir James Graham, first lord of the admiralty, resigned office; their example being soon followed by the duke of Richmond and the earl of Ripon.

On this occasion, that firm friend of a reforming ministry, lord Ebrington, got up an address to earl Grey, signed by many members of the house of commons, entreating him to retain his place, and expressing their unabated confidence in him, as the only minister on whom the country could safely rely. His lordship, in reply, announced his intention of making any personal sacrifice, in support of those principles on which his administration was founded; but he was obliged to admit the embarrassment and mischief produced by a reckless desire shown for innovation; while he deprecated that 'constant and active pressure from without,' in favor of measures, the necessity of which had not been fully proved, and which were not strictly regulated by attention to settled institutions in church and state. 'On no other principles,' he justly observed, 'could this or any other administration be conducted with advantage or safety.' Too many persons, even of his own party, were inclined to blame earl Grey, for the stand which he

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

made against downward movements, after the reform bill had passed; attributing to aristocratic pride what was due to consistency of character and principles of independence. When that species of aristocratic pride, which consists in a preference of conviction and consistency to power and place, shall be extinct in Great Britain, what will be left to distinguish her from countries which have only imitated her free institutions?² The vacant offices were soon filled up: the marquis of Conyngham became postmaster-general, and the earl of Carlisle privy seal; lord Auckland succeeded sir James Graham at the admiralty; and Mr. Spring Rice, whose sprightly talents, and aptitude for business had long marked him as a man destined to rise in the state, was made colonial secretary in place of Mr. Stanley: Mr. Abercrombie and Mr. Cutlar Fergusson, the latter of whom had not previously held office, were appointed respectively master of the Mint and judge advocate; Mr. Robert Grant being knighted and sent to India as governor of Bombay; and Mr. Poulett Thompson being made president, instead of vice-president, of the board of trade.

While the cabinet was thus shaken by internal dissensions, publicity was given to a declaration made by the king to the Irish prelates, which seemed to announce, that his majesty would not regard any designs against their church with greater favor than the retired ministers had shown. When the house met again on the second of June, lord Althorp informed them that a lay commission had been appointed to inquire into the whole state of church property and church affairs throughout Ireland; also into those of Roman catholics and dissenters; into the number of schools in each parish, and the different religious persuasions of those that attended them: the minutest investigation of church property was to be made; and

² They who aim at depreciating the political character of lord Grey, might perhaps attack it with a fairer show of reason, if they instanced the very imperfect manner in which he redeemed his pledge of retrenchment in the public expenditure, confining it, as he did, chiefly to the salaries of a few overworked clerks; or if they noticed the exercise of his ministerial patronage, which filled almost every department of the state with his own relations and connexions.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
— 1834.

the proportion of protestants, catholics, and dissenters set down. No ministers would have advised such a measure as this, without being prepared to act on that report, as circumstances should point out, and as the information procured should warrant; accordingly, his lordship trusted, that Mr. Ward, satisfied with what government had done, would withdraw his motion: the honorable member, however, refused this request, because he must press for a recognition of the principle; especially as, from what he saw passing around him, he was afraid ministers would not continue long in office; and the commission would be inoperative. Lord Althorp then moved, as an amendment, the previous question; chiefly on the ground, that of all propositions, this was one which required much previous inquiry and detailed information: he had never swerved from the principle, that an established church ought to be maintained; and it was because he thought the result of inquiry would be favorable, that he had joined in recommending the commission: he was convinced, that to apply its surplus revenues to moral and religious education, would tend to advance the interests, both of our establishment and of protestantism generally; but he did not see the propriety or utility, before members possessed the requisite information, of asserting a right, which he was confident the house would exercise whenever a case for its interference was made out. After a long debate, the amendment was carried by 396 votes against 120; and the majority would have been still larger, had not many conservative members, unwilling to assume even the appearance of tampering with this question, left the house before the division.

Irish tithe
bill.

Ministers, in the mean time, had been proceeding with a bill to amend the tithe system in Ireland, extinguishing tithe as a payment to be demanded in kind, and laying the burden, directly at least, on a different class of payers, in the shape of a land tax: the moderate members reserved their opinion of this measure until its details should be more fully known; but Mr. O'Connell, followed by Messrs. O'Connor,

Shiel, Grattan, and other declared enemies of a protestant establishment, immediately attacked it with unmeasured violence: their motive was obvious; for the ministerial plan did not abolish tithe altogether, which was the object now aimed at by the agitators: the landlords of Ireland, it was said, must look to themselves; for the principle on which opposition to tithes had hitherto been conducted, would soon be applied to rents; since the people would not regard the present measure as the slightest alleviation of their misery. O'Connell proposed, that two-thirds of the existing tithe should be abolished; the remaining third being left as a quit-rent on the land: after providing for the life interest of present incumbents, he would apply the produce to relieving the landlord from grand jury assessments, to the support of charities, and to other public purposes. This plan was characterised by lord John Russell as one of direct robbery and spoliation, which would be advantageous to none but landowners: on a division, the original resolution was carried by 219 against 42; and a bill, founded on it, was brought in. When its second reading was moved, certain alterations were introduced to conciliate Irish members; but their opposition continued, and increased in violence; for with them no plan could be favorably accepted, which did not recognise the principle of despoiling the protestant church: the second reading, therefore, was not carried without long debates and various manœuvres; while the conservative members who spoke were generally inclined to carry the bill into committee: their objection to it was, not that it left too much to the clergy, but that it took too much from them; yet they deemed it necessary to support ministers, in order to prevent worse measures from being brought forward: they also believed that the money to be secured by the present measure was to be applied exclusively to purposes of the church; although this belief was somewhat shaken by the language of lord John Russell, who stated, that he understood the bill to be one for securing a certain fund appropriated to religious and charitable purposes;

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

and if parliament found it was not so applied, it would be its duty to consider about a new appropriation: he thought the revenues of the Irish church much larger than the religious instruction of the protestant population, or the safety of the church required: when therefore this property was once successfully vindicated against those who unjustly withheld it, he would be prepared to do justice to Ireland; for if ever a people had reason to complain of a grievance, it was the people of that country, in relation to the present appropriation of tithes. These sentiments were hailed by the Roman catholic party, as an approaching concession of all they had demanded.

When the bill went into committee, interminable debates ensued, and various alterations were made; but on a resolution moved by Mr. Littleton,—‘that for any deficit which might arise in the sums accruing to the commissioners of woods and forests, out of the land-tax or rent-charges, payable for the composition of Irish tithes, to the payment of which the consolidated fund was pledged, that fund should be indemnified from the revenues in the hands of the ecclesiastical commissioners, and out of the perpetuity purchase fund, placed at their disposal by the act of the last session, intituled the Irish church temporalities act,—Mr. Stanley attacked the measure, and the proceedings of his former colleagues, in the most violent and unmeasured language: believing that government, which he compared to a set of *thimble-rig players* at a country fair, was committing injustice, and would yet fail in its aim; that the country was against this injustice; and that Ireland, after it had been perpetrated, would not be more tranquil,—he would take the sense of the committee on the resolution now proposed. After lord Althorp had replied to this truculent attack of his late colleague, Mr. Hume moved an amendment; which, after a sharp debate, was thrown out, and the ministerial resolution carried by 235 votes against 171: at this stage, however, the progress of the bill was arrested for a time by circumstances, to which it becomes necessary to advert.

In the preceding session it had been found requisite to pass what was termed the coercion bill; to put down, if possible, that insurrectionary violence and combination, which filled Ireland with crimes and misery: the act was to expire in August this year; and ministers, instigated by information received, had determined to propose its renewal, with the omission of those parts that related to the trial of offenders in certain cases by courts-martial: there were, however, other provisions in the bill, which the agitators viewed with still greater dislike; as interfering with their own influence, by preventing those meetings, which enabled them to work on the ignorance and passions of the multitude: to escape from these restrictions, was much more important to them, than that the peasant should have the benefit of a jury, or of an investigation by the civil magistrate: the lord lieutenant had recommended, that the whole act should be renewed, with the exception of the clause relative to courts-martial; but on the twenty-third of June, lord Grey received from him a letter, intimating that the provision against public meetings might also be dispensed with. What influence or suggestions might have been used with the marquis Wellesley, to induce this change of opinion, became afterwards the subject of much discussion; but certain members of the cabinet appeared to have been corresponding with him without the knowledge of earl Grey; the object of their communications being, to smoothe the path of ministers in the house of commons, through concessions to O'Connell and his party: his lordship, who dissented intirely from these views, immediately wrote to the lord lieutenant, to reconsider the subject, taking nothing into account but what was fitting for Ireland; and lord Wellesley concluded his correspondence, by adhering to his recommendation; more especially, if, by means of such omission, an extension of the term for the act could be obtained. When the subject was brought before the cabinet, its members were divided in opinion; and the minority, consisting of lord Althorp,

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

Renewal of
Irish coercion
bill.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

Mr. C. Grant, Mr. Spring Rice, Mr. Ellice, and Mr. Abercrombie,³ objected to a renewal of the clauses in question; though they acquiesced in the determination of the majority, that the bill should be proposed in the form desired by the premier. On its second reading, lord Durham objected to the clauses regarding public meetings; when earl Grey declared his dissent from him to be absolute; and that, if he could not have proposed the bill with those clauses, he would not have proposed it at all; for without them, it would be ineffectual, impolitic, and cruel; punishing the miserable victims of delusion, but letting those escape, who, whatever may have been the cause, had of late years supplied Ireland with fuel for agitation and disturbance: in these sentiments the lord chancellor coincided; thinking it would be strange if attention should not be given to the cause of excitement, as well as to the parties excited: the bill, having been thus read without any serious opposition, the committee was fixed for the seventh of July; but in the mean time, disclosures were made in the house of commons, which stopped its progress in its present shape, and overturned the minister who had proposed it. Mr. Littleton, the Irish secretary, had committed the fatal error of negotiating, unknown to the head of the government, with O'Connell; and, for the purpose of soothing, had entrusted him with certain views and determinations of the cabinet: the great agitator having, in an address to the electors of the county of Wexford, fulminated threats and denunciations against the whig ministry; imploring the reformers of Great Britain to come forward, and 'teach the insane dotard, now at the head of administration, that Englishmen and Scotchmen were alive to the sufferings of Ireland,'—Mr. Littleton, instead of meeting such a temper with uncompromising firmness, preferred to make Mr. O'Connell a confidant, and to give assurances, or, at least, to encourage expectations, for which he had no authority: he seems to have expected some communication from the lord lieutenant

³ See Annual Register for 1834, p. 102.

regarding the omission of the clauses; hence he resolved, before the minister or cabinet had made any decision, to communicate to him, under the seal of secrecy and confidence, the sentiments of the Irish government; and to communicate it as ensuring a similar determination on the part of ministers: he spoke of the propriety of doing this to lord Althorp, who saw no harm in it, but entreated him to use extreme caution, and by no means to commit himself. Under such circumstances, Mr. Littleton sent for O'Connell, on the twentieth of June, and made the desired communication, with an assurance, that only a short measure, for repressing agrarian disturbances, would be proposed; also, that if the coercion bill was again thought necessary, it should not be introduced by him: in consequence of which interview, the agitator, having promised secrecy, and support to ministers in putting down disturbances, withdrew the repeal candidate, whom he had started for Wexford with every prospect of success.

To the dismay of Mr. Littleton, the minister and majority of the cabinet, contrary to the suggestions of the lord lieutenant, determined to retain the clause respecting public meetings; and the Irish secretary was compelled to belie his confidential communication, after having brought ministers into a state of inextricable embarrassment: he communicated, however, to Mr. O'Connell the impossibility of those hopes, which he had held out, being realised; but begged him to take no public notice of this, until he should have seen earl Grey's speech introducing the bill: O'Connell declared, that he then remarked to the Irish secretary, that, if he did not resign, he would be guilty of deception; and that Mr. Littleton answered; 'Say nothing of that to-day,' or 'Wait till to-morrow:' but with regard to the fact, whether such an answer was or was not given, the two gentlemen publicly averred before the house, each on his honor, that what the other stated was not consistent with truth.

Mr. O'Connell thought he had been deceived, and was no longer bound to secrecy: he was in possession

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

of the secret, that the Irish government was, at least, not friendly to this unpopular measure; he knew well the advantageous position which he had thus gained for opposing it, and the difficulties in which government would be involved by the disclosure of its own dissensions, and of the fact, that many of its members were acting in opposition to their convictions in a matter which concerned the constitutional rights of the people: on the third of July, therefore, two days after the bill had been introduced in the lords, he put to Mr. Littleton many annoying questions; and having driven him to declare, that whoever might bring in the bill, he would vote for it, asserted that he (Mr. O'Connell) had been egregiously deceived: Mr. Littleton was then under the necessity of detailing the whole proceedings; and a very angry discussion ensued. Two days afterwards, the honorable gentleman tendered his resignation, which was refused; his colleagues, as lord Althorp stated, on the seventh of July, valuing his services too highly so to dispense with them.

On that day, the coercion bill passed through committee in the lords without alteration; and on the same evening, in the commons, lord Althorp, for the purpose of announcing its approach, presented papers relative to the state of Ireland, and moved for their being printed: this of course led to a discussion on the sentiments of the cabinet, and the change of opinion manifested by lord Wellesley; after which, O'Connell, who was more violent and abusive than ever, moved an amendment, that the papers should be referred to a select committee; and when this was rejected by a large majority, he gave notice for the production of so much of the lord lieutenant's correspondence, as would explain the reason why he opposed a renewal of the coercion act on or about the twentieth of June.

Resigna-
tion of
earl Grey.

Lord Althorp, now probably supposing that it would be impossible to carry the bill through in its original form, and not expecting it to remain a secret that he himself had been opposed to a renewal of the restrictive clause, sent in his resignation; nor, after a per-

sonal interview with lord Grey, could he be induced to recall it, and appear in the unenviable light of a cabinet minister submitting to conduct measures which suspended the constitution, contrary to his own conviction of their necessity: the resignation, however, of the chancellor of the exchequer involved that of earl Grey. The premier convinced himself that it was impossible for him to proceed, when deprived of lord Althorp's assistance; and finding that the latter could not be dissuaded from his purpose, he gave in his own resignation, which his majesty accepted: no others, however, followed; though, while lord Brougham had been stating to the lords, that he, at least, had no intention to retire, and that the only seceders were lords Grey and Althorp, the latter announced in the house of commons, that 'the administration was at an end.' This, however, was not the case: instead of seeking a premier to construct a new cabinet, the members of the old one resolved to remain together, and select a new head: lord Melbourne, therefore, the home secretary, was elevated to this post, and kissed hands, on the sixteenth of July, as first lord of the treasury:⁴ to obtain the co-operation, however, of lord Althorp, the new premier was obliged to declare that ministers did not intend to proceed with the coercion bill now before parliament; but that another measure, omitting certain clauses contained in the former, would be introduced in the lower house. Thus the great agitator exhibited his power, not only in throwing out that prime minister who was most influential in resisting 'the pressure from without;' but in compelling the majority of the cabinet, under his successor, to relax those restrictive clauses which were to impose fetters on his own powers of agitation. Lord Melbourne's announcement of the new bill on the seventeenth of July, produced an irregular, but vehement discussion, in which the conduct of government, and some of its individual members, was assailed by

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

Adminis-
tration of
lord Mel-
bourne.

⁴ He was succeeded by viscount Duncannon; and sir John Cam Hobhouse was placed at the head of the woods and forests, with a seat in the cabinet: lord Carlisle soon afterwards resigned the privy seal, and was succeeded by the earl of Mulgrave.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

the earl of Wicklow, lord Wharncliffe, the dukes of Wellington and Buckingham, and other peers; who maintained, that since the revolution, no instance had occurred of such inconsistency and tergiversation: the modified coercion bill, however, was introduced by lord Althorp on the eighteenth of July; and, having been rapidly carried through the commons, passed the lords on the twenty-ninth, under a strong protest signed by the dukes of Cumberland and Wellington, with twenty-one other peers.

Rejection
of Irish
tithe bill by
the peers.

Ministers, having thus provided for the tranquillity of Ireland, by what they considered enactments of sufficient energy and severity, now returned to what was intended as the great recompense of her temporary subjection to a strained power of the law: accordingly, the order of the day, on the twenty-ninth, was read for the house of commons to resolve itself into a committee on the tithe bill. Mr. O'Connell immediately moved, as an amendment, that this should take place that day six months; on the ground, that it was preposterous to go at so late a period of the session into committee on a bill containing 122 clauses, relative to a matter so complicated and difficult: this amendment, however, only obtained fourteen voices in its favor; though others were carried in committee, which went to alter the operation and consequences of the bill: lord Melbourne, on moving its second reading in the upper house, gave the peers clearly to understand, that, if it was lost, government would propose no other grant to relieve the Irish clergy. Although he admitted, that there might be reasons for viewing with jealousy and distrust the quarter whence certain alterations, made in the bill subsequently to its original introduction, proceeded; yet he did not think the arrangement itself bad for the church: the tithe, in future, was to be received by the crown, and paid by the landlord; who, in return for the burden thus imposed on him, was to have a deduction of two-fifths, or forty per cent. of the original composition: the incomes of the clergy, however, were not to bear the whole deduction, which was only to be twenty-two and a half per cent. on them;

that is, twenty per cent. for increased security, and two and a half per cent. for the expenses of collection: incumbents therefore would receive £77 10s. for every £100, without trouble, without the risk of bad debts, and without any of that odium which had hitherto attended the collection of tithes. Another consequence was, that the clergy would be relieved from the repayment of sums already advanced to them from the treasury; as that charge would be laid on the landlord: the revision of existing compositions, made under the acts of 1823 and 1832, seemed to him also a proper enactment. The bill underwent a complete discussion; the tory lords seeing no security for the rights and interests of the Irish clergy, in yielding to what they considered an act of injustice; while their opponents thought that the clerical body would find it more advantageous to obtain the sum proposed without risk, than to recover a smaller, if they recovered any at all, through scenes of blood and slaughter: ‘but the bill,’ said lord Brougham, ‘was to be rejected, because Mr. O’Connell approved of it, and had amended it: that was to say, a man whom they disliked had only to advise them how to save the country from civil war, in order to ensure the rejection of such a suggestion! It was very easy for such politicians to say,—Am I to degrade myself by taking a leaf out of Mr. O’Connell’s book? Shall I permit him to dictate to me? But he did dictate to them; and the only difference was;—that instead of taking the thing honestly and directly as a beneficial suggestion, they submitted to take the law from him, by enabling him to decide what they should not do.’

The earl of Ripon and the duke of Richmond wished the bill to go into committee, with an intention of restoring it to its original state; and if unsuccessful there, they would vote against its third reading: on a division, however, the second reading was rejected by a majority of sixty-seven: the Irish clergy were thus thrown on the charity of the British public, by whom a very large subscription was made to relieve their distress. A bill brought in at this time was passed to

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

Efforts of
dissenters.

amend and extend the Irish temporalities act of the preceding session, under which the church cess was to be abolished.

But it was not the church of Ireland alone that engrossed attention: the dissenters of England, forming a numerous body, and possessing, in many instances, great respectability, wealth, and influence, became anxious, not only to obtain those privileges, from which, as religionists, they were excluded; but to be relieved from the necessity of supporting an establishment, in the advantages of which they did not participate: in accordance with these views, various petitions were presented by them to parliament, in the beginning of the session, praying to be relieved from church rates; and, in many instances, urging the separation of church and state, or recommending the general establishment of the voluntary system: nor did they want supporters in parliament; since to those, whose opinions rested on an honest belief, were added many who looked merely at the rich prize which might be gained in church property, if the establishment could be overthrown; beside all who professed that no religious creed should be established; and those who wished to use the spirit of innovation as a political engine, gradually undermining old political institutions. These petitions led to no other result than that of producing a strong expression of opposite opinion, and calling forth numerous anti-petitions, praying parliament to preserve the church inviolate: ministers also fulfilled their declarations, that they would listen to no proposition for its destruction: nevertheless, a motion made by Mr. Rippon, the new member for Gateshead, to expel bishops from the house of lords, under the modest plea of relieving them from the duties of legislation, found fifty-eight voices, in a house consisting of 183 members; and the announcement was hailed with loud cheers and acclamations.

Among the grievances of which dissenters complained in their numerous petitions, none were more strongly dwelt on than their practical exclusion from

degrees at Oxford and Cambridge, in consequence of being required to sign a declaration of conformity with the church of England, or to subscribe her articles: they demanded, as a matter of civil right, that religious tests should be abolished, and the universities thrown open for education, and a certain extent of graduation, to men of any creed. It was clear that their chance of success would be greatly increased, if they could state a feasible case of concurrent opinion in these learned bodies themselves; and fortune at this time favored their exertions at Cambridge. Great pains had been lately taken by some of the medical professors in that university, to advance the interests of their particular science; and being alarmed at the exertions made in the metropolis, not only to establish a medical school, but to obtain the power of granting degrees, they felt anxious to ward off the mischief which might thence accrue to their Alma Mater, by opening her doors wider to students of medicine: for this purpose, however, it was necessary to admit others with them into the sanctuary; and as a considerable body existed in the senate, who thought the time had now arrived when dissenters from the established church might safely be admitted to such academical degrees as were unconnected with theology; and who, instead of seeing danger to our establishment from the introduction of a few young men of the higher class of dissidents into the academical body, thought rather that the dissenting community had reason to fear for the conversion of their own youth, when brought into the desired association;—a petition was got up without much difficulty, and signed by sixty-three resident members of the senate, praying for an abolition of religious tests offered to candidates for degrees in arts, law, and physic: at the same time, in making this request, the petitioners stated, ‘that they were only asking for a restitution of their ancient laws and laudable customs; since the restrictions complained of were imposed on the university in the reign of James I.; most of them in a manner informal and unprece-

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

dented, and grievously against the wishes of many then members of the senate; in times of bitter party animosities, and during the prevalence of dogmas both in church and state, which are at variance with the present spirit of English law, and with the true principles of christian toleration.'

This petition, which simply asked the removal of subscription,—neither seeking the admission of dissenters as such, nor their participation in college fellowships, nor any change on their account in lectures or discipline,—was presented on the twenty-first of March by earl Grey in the lords, and on the twenty-fourth by Mr. Spring Rice in the commons; being considered as a convenient instrument to try the temper of the two houses, and ascertain the views of different parties, by the discussion which it was sure to produce: as the subject, however, seemed new to parliament, no motion was made till after the Easter recess; when colonel Williams moved an address to his majesty, praying him to signify his royal pleasure to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, that those bodies should act no longer under the edicts or letters of James I. 1616: it was, however, thought, for many reasons, more advisable to proceed by bill; and Mr. Wood, one of the members for Preston, moved an amendment to that effect, which was carried by one hundred and eighty-five to forty-four.

Though the Cambridge petition had been presented in both houses by members of the cabinet, and government had declared its intire concurrence in the prayer of the petitioners, no proposition on the subject was brought forward by ministers: favorable as they were to this measure of relaxation, they expressed hopes, that, as a portion of one of the universities was already inclined to it, the object, if not pressed too eagerly, might be effected with the concurrence of both those learned bodies, in a much better form, and to much better purpose, than if they were made to act reluctantly under the compulsion of a statute: they wished therefore that neither parliament nor government should be driven to interfere in the business, before

there was a prospect of terminating it in the best and most satisfactory manner: the dissenters, however, and their partisans took the matter into their own hands, and pressed it on with such unseemly violence, as soon disgusted their best friends: ministers would not run the risk of preventing them; but took no lead in the measure, though they supported it by their speeches and votes.

Before the bill was brought in, the sentiments of the great mass in the two academical bodies became fully expressed: it was soon discovered, that the sixty-three petitioners at Cambridge, by offending the honest principles of many, and the rancorous party-spirit of a few, had raised a storm, which no argument or explanation, though it engaged some of the ablest pens in that university, could allay. Meetings were held almost daily, pamphlets were showered forth like hail, the public journals gave up their pages to the contest, and the university pulpit resounded with the most awful denunciations: during the excitement thus provoked, a counter-petition was signed by 258 members, resident and non-resident, comprising eleven heads of houses, eight professors, and twenty-nine tutors; while a second was signed by 755 undergraduates and bachelors of arts: these were presented, on the twenty-first of April, by the duke of Gloucester, as chancellor of the university, in the house of lords; and by Mr. Goulburn, one of its representatives, in the house of commons. On the ninth of May, Mr. Estcourt presented a similar document from the university of Oxford; and a second petition was sent from Cambridge, signed by 1000 members of the senate, who had not signed the other.

Although Mr. Wood brought in his bill soon after the Easter holidays, it was not till the twentieth of June that he was enabled to move the second reading: Mr. Estcourt then proposed, as an amendment, that it should be read a second time that day six months: he argued, that the course of education pursued at Oxford and Cambridge was essentially a religious one, and the supporters of the bill could not succeed in their

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

object without destroying the religious part of the system: this, indeed, he said, was the aim of the dissenters;—to introduce a system of education, which would lead to a dissolution of the connexion existing between church and state; or, in other words, to the destruction of our established religion. Mr. Herbert, who seconded the amendment, enforced the argument. —‘It had been suggested,’ he said, ‘that persons of all denominations might be taught the leading doctrines of morality and religion, without touching on debateable questions: but he doubted if this were possible; and he expected no advantage from so vague a system of theology,—an emasculated kind of instruction in christianity and morals, producing no feeling of confidence or reverence in the minds of its pupils: a bill like the present would operate as a direct exclusion of the clergy from the universities; and every parish in England would feel the consequences:’ in addition to this argument, the honorable gentleman asked, why the dissenters, who were an opulent and intelligent body, did not found colleges of their own, in which they might adopt that system which pleased them best; and if they hedged in their institutions with religious tests, calculated to exclude churchmen, the latter would not complain. The answer to this was given in the speech of Mr. Potter, who, with Messrs. Ewart and Poulter, spoke in favor of the bill; contending that the alteration required was necessary, no less for the benefit of the universities, than in justice to the dissenters: by the present system, the latter were impeded in their progress to the bar, by having to keep terms for five years instead of three; and were prevented from becoming fellows of the college of physicians, for want of academical degrees; and this could not be remedied by degrees of their own. With regard to subscription of the thirty-nine articles, it was said, that instead of ensuring sincerity in religion, it generated hypocrisy and indifference to religion altogether: it was also declared, that the exclusive principles of the universities, being no longer in accordance with the spirit of the age, could not be

much longer preserved; especially when so large a body of dissenters had grown up, actuated by a desire of obtaining their just rights. Mr. C. W. Wynne was convinced that the present bill was but the first of a series of measures, which, if not checked in time, must lead to the subversion of the established church, and the destruction of all our institutions: on the other hand, Mr. Spring Rice complained, that it was unfair to treat the bill, not according to its own deserts, but in reference to other supposed measures, which might or might not be connected with that under discussion: in the course of his argument, he asked, what could be more inconsistent and unjust, than the practice now prevailing at Cambridge, where dissenters were admitted so far as instruction was concerned, but excluded from every thing to which instruction ought to lead? they were admitted to the fullest and most complete course of study until the twelfth term; when, on being brought into fair competition with their fellow-students, the odious principle of exclusion intervened; and the dissenter was told, that however obedient he had been to college regulations, however high the eminence he had acquired, still he would not be allowed the badge or symbol of his acquirements, simply because he was a dissenter: he really thought, that so far from deteriorating or endangering the church establishment, the approximation of dissenters to its members in a course of education, might bring many within the pale of that church, who would otherwise continue to dissent from it; and he denied that the mixture of persons differing in religious persuasions at Cambridge, had been injurious, either to the university, or any other institution of the country. The house had the benefit of experience; for in Dublin dissenters were admitted to degrees, though excluded from fellowships, and from all participation in the internal management of the university: and what mighty mischief had followed the admission? Was the university less orthodox in its principles, or less a protestant foundation than before? Had the zeal of its public instructors been lessened, or their sphere of

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

usefulness narrowed, by this interference? It had been said, that the dissenters ought to found universities of their own: he concurred in that argument; but the English universities would not allow them to do so: when they proposed such a step, in order to educate the youth of their own persuasion, and reward them with those honors which the universities denied, and thus sought to secure to themselves academical honors and privileges; the universities stepped forward, and said,—‘We will not only exclude you from our own seats, but will also prevent you from enjoying the advantages and privileges of a university of your own.’ This double ground of exclusion and prohibition was what no one could defend.

The colonial secretary was answered by Mr. Goulburn, who argued, that in proportion as the advocates of this bill enforced the danger of excluding dissenters, they made manifest the ruinous consequences of concession: if the dissenters deemed it so great a hardship to be deprived of the empty honor of a degree, what would they say, if they were admitted to degrees, and found a bar raised against their admission to college emoluments and distinctions? When it was said by the right honorable gentleman, that Dublin afforded an example which they might safely follow, it was an unhappy one in itself, and unfairly stated: in Dublin, the degree conferred on its possessor no power of government, and on this point all the merits of the intended comparison turned: besides, an Irish member had a motion now on the order-book, requiring that dissenters should be placed on the same footing with members of the establishment, in respect to scholarships and fellowships in that university; and his plea was, that, as we were about to admit dissenters to degrees in England, he saw no reason why dissenters in Ireland should not have the advantages which those degrees conferred in England. In speaking of the course, pursued at Cambridge, the broad distinction had been forgotten;—that a dissenter was not admitted as such, but as a member of the university willing to submit to its regulations; and, till the period for

taking his degree arrived, he followed the rules prescribed by that body: but, if he were brought to college openly as a dissenter, either he was absolved from the restraints of religious discipline, or was forced to proclaim his own hypocrisy. Under the proposed bill, every class of dissenters, Jews, Turks, infidels, Socinians, men of any denomination, would be admissible to degrees: it repealed *ipso facto*, all the statutes which regulated the internal government of colleges, and did away with all that religious attendance which had been justly lauded: now religious instruction should never be disjoined from general education; and there had been a time in our history, when opposite sentiments would have drawn down universal reprobation. The right honorable gentleman went on to show the evil consequences of a system of education without a religious test, drawn from foreign universities; and implored the house to abstain from depriving christianity of advantages which it derived from the discipline and constitution of our own—from dissevering religion and learning.

Mr. Stanley said, that when the first Cambridge petition was presented, he had been disposed to concur in its prayer, so far as might be consistent with the safety of our established church: but he would not conceal his feeling, that the tone subsequently assumed, and the principles asserted by dissenters, had tended to change in some respects his opinion, and rendered it necessary for the house to view their claims with more jealousy than before: still, he would vote for the principle of the bill; but not as declaring for a change in the system of university education. It was only in Oxford that subscription to the thirty-nine articles was required from a student entering the university: though a member of that university, he wished to see this part of the system altered; for he could not bring himself to believe in the gloss which had been put on it;—that such subscription was merely a matter of form; and that no real adhesion to those articles was implied, until the party was instructed in their meaning.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

Sir Robert Peel, after a long speech, in which he characterised the bill as an enactment, intended to give to Jews, infidels, and atheists,—to the man who professed some religion, and to the man who professed none,—a statutable right of demanding admission into our universities; declared that, after a removal of all civil disabilities from dissenters, by the repeal of the corporation and test acts, and from Roman catholics, by the act of emancipation; and after a vast change effected by the reform bill in the constitution of parliament, the question at last was, were we, or were we not, to maintain an established religion? In all those measures of relief alluded to, there was no intimation, that they would lead to farther demands, and lay a foundation for ulterior claims: to concede the demands now made, he asserted, would not be for the advantage of dissenters themselves; to whom, as well as to all christians, the preservation of the established church was an inestimable benefit; to protect them, as well from superstition on the one hand as from fanaticism on the other; and secure to them and their posterity the decent observance of divine worship, and the substantial benefits of toleration, which could be secured only by such an establishment. What, he asked, constituted the union between church and state? What was the essence of an established church? What, but a legislative recognition of it on the part of the state? Parliament, therefore, was intitled to say to the dissenters,—‘With that legislative recognition you shall not interfere.’

Sir R. H. Inglis and lord Sandon also opposed the bill, which was supported by lord Althorp, who strenuously contended, that by such support he would be guilty of no hostile act against the established church: he maintained, that interference with divine worship was no necessary consequence of the bill, neither would it interfere with the education of members of the church of England; for if it passed into a law, it would only intitle dissenters to take a degree without subscription to any articles of religion, or any declaration of faith; neither investing them with fellowships, nor

with the power of instructing youth: for the principle therefore of the bill he was prepared to vote; and in committee all changes might be effected, for limiting that principle to the extent required: the house then divided, and the second reading was carried by 321 votes against 174. In committee, the speaker gave his decided opposition to the principle of the bill; and, some amendments having been made, it was read a third time, and passed on the twenty-eighth of July, by a majority of 164 against 75. The earl of Radnor took charge of the bill in the house of lords, where the arguments for and against it did not vary from those used in the commons, so as to render a detail of them necessary. The duke of Gloucester, chancellor of the university of Cambridge, after denouncing the bill, not only as uncalled for, but most unjust and mischievous, moved, as an amendment, that it be read that day six months: his royal highness was followed by the duke of Wellington, chancellor of Oxford, who argued forcibly on the same side. Lord chancellor Brougham supported the bill, because he thought it went to remove a practical grievance, without affecting the discipline of the universities, or the safety of the church; and the discussion was closed by a long and ingenious speech from the bishop of Exeter; when a division took place, and the amendment was carried by an overwhelming majority of 187, against 85 who voted for the second reading.

On this perplexing subject, it must be highly satisfactory to those who signed the first petition from Cambridge, to find their sentiments appreciated, and their judgment confirmed, by an eminent prelate, raised to the episcopal bench, with the approbation of all parties, wherever his extended reputation for the instruction of youth, and for the advancement of a sound and religious education, has reached. Speaking of the difficulties involved in the question, he observes;—‘They are greater on several accounts at the sister university, than at that to which I more especially belong, owing to subscription to the articles being required at Oxford from all students at their

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

admission: this not being requisite at Cambridge *in limine*, has opened a more general access to that university; and having known it above forty years, by actual residence, by frequent visits, and by constant communication with many of its tutors and heads of colleges, I must own, that I never knew or heard of any evil resulting from such facility: the sons of dissenters, of various denominations, have been, and now are, educated there, in the same lecture-rooms, submit to the same discipline and regulations, and attend the same chapel service, as those whose parents are of the established church: I have known the sons of unitarian ministers admitted to examination for the same degree, and fairly earn the same honors at those examinations, as the sons of clergymen of the establishment: so far, therefore, we must admit, that no invidious distinctions have been made, either in the instruction given, or in the rewards allotted to those who have profited by it: but surely it seems absurd to say to the dissenter,—we will allow you to attend our lectures, will examine you for a degree, and will assign to you, according to your proficiency and desert, such honors as we assign to our pupils of the established church: but the degree itself, for which we examine, you shall not have, unless you subscribe yourself a member of the church of England. Really, if consistency be of any value, it is preserved with greater dignity by that university which proscribes admission, *in limine*, to all who do not subscribe the articles; than by that, which tantalises, as it were, by admission and examination; and then disappoints the very encouragement it has given, by withholding the fruit of those exertions which it has fostered and matured, at the very moment when it is to be gathered. On such grounds, therefore, had I been a resident member of the senate, I might have been induced to sign the Cambridge petition, which has been the source of so much discussion, and, I fear, of so much disunion. It is but honest to add, that the subsequent avowals of our dissenting brethren would have given me cause to repent such a proceeding, without having stipulated for certain

restrictions, by way of security to ourselves, which I should not previously have thought necessary.”⁵

As ministers had been aided greatly in the last elections by the dissenters, this was thought a very convenient time by that body to push their pretensions; and, as they considered their liability to pay church rates a pressing grievance, they procured a motion to be made in the house of commons, by Mr. Divett, to relieve them from this compulsory payment: the mover utterly disclaimed all intention of interfering with tithes; for though he conceived that men, who dissented from a religious establishment, should not be compelled to pay for its support, he was himself a churchman, and thought he was doing the church good service, by striving to remove that which created enemies against her. Other members enforced the statements which he had made on this point; and according to them, the dissenters had become so formidable in numbers, that if practical grievances were not removed, the established church would possess little security. Lord Althorp said, that as he had himself given notice of a motion on this subject, and did not think the present a desirable occasion to adopt the principle contained in the resolution, he should move the previous question; but Mr. Divett expressed himself willing to wait for the appearance of the ministerial plan, and withdrew his motion. On the twenty-first of April, therefore, his lordship brought forward that plan, in the shape of a resolution, ‘that after a fixed time, church rates should cease; and in lieu thereof, a sum, not exceeding £250,000, should be granted from the land-tax, to be applied as parliament might direct.’ His intention, he said, was to provide for the fabrics of the church, while he relieved dissenters: this scheme, however, did not suit their views; and their friends immediately attacked it with unmeasured violence, led on by Mr. Hume, who moved, that all the words in the resolution should be ex-

⁵ Charge delivered to the clergy of the archdeaconry of Derby, June the twenty-sixth, 1834, by the rev. S. Butler, D.D., F.R.S., afterwards bishop of Lichfield and Coventry.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1834.

punged, except those which declared, 'that church rates should cease and determine.' The proposal, they said, was a contemptible juggle, founded on the old financial principle, that if money were taken out of the pockets of the people by indirect means, they would not be sensible of their loss: the friends of the establishment also objected to the plan, because it questioned generally the rights of the church, infringing on some of them, and left others on a less sure foundation than before. At a division, indeed, the motion was carried by a majority of 256 against 140; but government determined to proceed no farther with the proposed measure: churchmen, however, considered that one advantage was gained, in the dissenters having been brought to disclose, somewhat prematurely, the real purposes which they had in view, and to proclaim opinions tending to the abolition of a religious establishment.

Ministers were equally unfortunate in another attempt to gratify the dissenters, by allowing them to celebrate the marriage ceremony in their own chapels, and thus escape what they called a grievous oppression,—the necessity of being married according to the rites of the establishment: a bill to this effect, brought in by lord John Russell, was refused, principally on the ground, that it required the banns to be published in a parish church; which, they said, involved a principle, that degraded them below their fellow-subjects.

The commutation of tithes in England was a subject still more complicated and difficult; for it involved so many interests of different kinds, and so many details requiring minute attention and technical precision, that the adjustment of any fair and complete scheme was a work requiring much time, patience, and circumspection. In moving a resolution to this effect, lord Althorp set out with two propositions, which he thought could not reasonably be denied;—'first, that whatever difference of opinion might exist as to the abstract right of tithes, they did not belong to the landlord; secondly, that the revenues of our established church were not larger than its purposes re-

quired: tithes therefore must be treated as property belonging to the church; and consequently they could not be taken away without a fair equivalent. Doubtless, it was often said, that if a fair equivalent was substituted, no relief would be granted to the occupier of the land: but this was a mistake; for there was in the mode of collection a source of irritation, with occasions of unpleasant collision, which would be avoided by commutation: beside this, the owners and occupiers of the soil would be actually benefited; for where they had laid out their capital in its cultivation, they were often losers by the tithes being taken in kind.' After these just and pertinent observations, his lordship proceeded to develop his plan; but the principles and details of the proposed method of commutation were found to be so little palatable either to the clergy or the landholders, that the measure was dropped for the present.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1834.

One act, however, was carried this session, which is sufficient to signalise the administration under whose auspices it was brought forward. Soon after their accession to office, the present ministers had appointed a commission of inquiry into the state and operation of our poor-laws, as more likely to be effective than any parliamentary committee: these commissioners had made their report, and an abstract of the valuable evidence which they had taken had been printed in the course of the preceding session. That report impressed government with a strong conviction of the necessity of interference; which was maintained on the ground, that the present administration of those laws tended directly and indirectly to the destruction of all property; whilst even to the laboring classes, whom they had been intended to benefit, nothing could be more fatal than their continued operation. It was the abuse of the system, rather than the system itself, which was chiefly to be reprehended: its worst faults indeed were scarcely older than the beginning of the present century, and had originated in measures intended for the benefit of those, to whose welfare they were now most destructive: a feeling at that

Poor laws
amendment
act.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

period extensively prevailed, that great discontent existed among the working classes; and a principle of legislation was adopted, in the thirty-sixth of George III., which, though very humane and well-intended, was found to produce the most baneful consequences: this principle was, that the relief to paupers ought to be given in such a manner, as to place them in a situation of comfort. Now, however, desirable it might be to place all our countrymen in such a situation; yet to give relief in the manner prescribed by this statute, was the duty of private charity, and ought not to be provided for by a compulsory rate: the effect of the law was to empower magistrates to order relief to the poor in their own dwellings; and the principle, being followed up, led from bad to worse, until all feelings of independence on the part of laborers yielded to reckless indifference, and honest industry to miserable sloth; for it was soon seen that the careful and industrious man was no better off than the idlest vagabond, who chose to marry and throw all the duties of a parent, and the burthen of providing for his children upon the parish: hence the little care and attention afterwards bestowed by those children upon their sick or aged parents; hence the frequency of these improvident marriages between boys and girls before they had obtained the slightest experience of life; hence also that enormous increase in the number of laborers which such marriages could not fail to produce; until it became evident, that instead of paupers being placed in a state of comfort, the whole laboring population, in many districts, had been brought into a state of deplorable misery and distress.

With regard to the law of settlement, as it now stood, it could scarcely be said to secure to the poor man a fixed abode, where, in case of accident or illness, he might make his wants known, and obtain assistance; for to decide to what parish he belonged, was very often so difficult, that he could not make it out himself, and lawyers every year received large sums for making it out in their own way: then it became a matter of such importance to a parish to

avoid increasing the number of its poor, that every mode was adopted to prevent a person from obtaining a settlement in it; by which means a poor man was prevented from carrying his labor to the best market, where it was most wanted, and would procure the highest wages: hence he was compelled to remain in idleness and want, where no employment could be found, because it was that parish where he was supposed to have acquired his legal settlement: thus whilst one place was actually in want of laborers, it was prevented from taking them, whilst another place which had too many could not diminish the numbers. Was the existing mode then of granting relief good for the poor man? Surely not: for as the rate-payer could not spend his money twice over, what was paid in relief was necessarily deducted from wages; and thus an honest industrious laborer was driven to receive as a *bounty* from his parish what he ought to have claimed as a *right* from his employer: the debt due to his industry was converted into a donation to him as a pauper, and consequently did him harm by lessening his independence and lowering him amongst his fellow men.

The dangers incurred by leaving matters as they stood were so great and imminent, that although the length of time, during which this system had been going on, rendered caution requisite, it was absolutely necessary to meet the difficulties of the case, adopt sounder principles, and carry them unflinchingly into execution: in fact, there were already some examples to be followed; for in about 100 parishes, the evils of the existing system had compelled the inhabitants to adopt an improved mode of administration; and in every instance the experiment had succeeded; while, under the old plan, even the cultivation of the soil, in some places, had been abandoned; so heavy was the pressure of rates, and so great the evils of mismanagement: the consequence was, that the support of their poor was thrown on neighboring parishes; these too would soon be reduced to a similar state; and thus pauperism would stride with increasing

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

rapidity through the land. It was from the nature of this growing mischief, and the necessity of checking it, that lord Althorp, when he brought forward his scheme on the seventeenth of April, defended the principle of entrusting the poor-laws to a board of commissioners: he admitted that it was an anomalous mode of legislation, and that the board would be invested with extraordinary powers; but this was rendered unavoidable by the necessity of the case. Our limits will not permit us to enter at large into the details of this most important bill; but it may be sufficient to notice its leading principles: these were,—to stop the system of allowances, or the making up artificially depressed wages out of the poor's-rate; to deprive magistrates of the power of ordering out-door relief to paupers; to alter, in certain cases, the constitution of parish vestries; to give large discretionary powers to the central commissioners; to simplify the law of settlement and removal, abolishing every mode of acquiring a settlement, except by birth or marriage, to render the mother of an illegitimate child liable to support it; and, for its aliment, to save from imprisonment the putative father, to whom she might swear it. In the debates on this measure, a few obstinate voices were raised against it, as against all kinds of alteration: many objections were made, especially to the great and alarming powers of the central board, and to the bastardy clause, which, throwing all the burden on the mother, became an inducement to infanticide: but the chancellor of the exchequer argued, in reply, that nothing had been stated, which could be regarded as an ostensible reason for not going into committee, where all matters which had been noticed would be open to consideration. The second reading was carried by the immense majority of 319 to 20; some clauses were modified, and others added, in committee; and on the first of July the bill was passed by 187 votes against 52.

In the house of lords this bill found its most violent opponent in lord Wynford; who at the second reading moved, as an amendment, that it be read that

day six months; not, however, on the ground, that there was nothing in the administration of our poor-laws that required correction, but because he conceived that the remedies proposed were partly unnecessary and partly inefficient; while some were oppressive and tyrannical: besides, he thought there was not sufficient time remaining to discuss so intricate and important a question during the present session. The earl of Winchelsea, however, as well as the dukes of Richmond and Wellington, supported the second reading, though they did not approve all the provisions in the bill: the latter thought it was the duty of their lordships to avoid procrastination, and without further delay proceed with a measure, which, if necessary at all, was necessary now: the division gave seventy-six peers for the second reading, and only thirteen against it. In committee, the central board was strongly attacked, especially by lord Wynford; but the chancellor, the duke of Wellington, and lord Winchelsea contended for its necessity. The bishop of Exeter pleaded eloquently in behalf of the unfortunate mother of an illegitimate child, and wished to make the father equally liable to its maintenance; or the survivor, in case of the death of either; but he was answered by his brother of London, who himself had been one of the commissioners; as well as by the lord chancellor, who contended that the law, as it yet stood, encouraged a detestable crime, second only to murder;—that of wilful and corrupt perjury: at the third reading of the bill, however, an amendment was made in this clause, to recover money from the putative father, when the mother was unable to maintain the child: alterations also were effected in the allowance-system, and the provision of settlement; the prohibition of out-door relief was mitigated; and various other changes were introduced: but when lord Althorp, on the eleventh of August, moved the commons to agree to the amendments of the peers, a counter amendment was moved, that they should be read that day six months: this proposal was chiefly supported by those who were

CHAP.
LXVIII.
—
1834.

opposed to the bill altogether, or wished it to be delayed till next session; but his lordship observed, that if the bill did not pass this session, he would be a bold man who should try it in the next: the amendment, therefore, was rejected by a large majority; and every alteration was agreed to, except that which expunged the provision, intitling dissenting clergymen to enter workhouses, for the purpose of giving religious instruction to inmates of their own persuasion: this was said to be a violation of the principle of religious liberty, and an insult to that small portion of good feeling toward dissenters which existed in the upper house. Thus was the great experiment of a revision and alteration of the poor-laws happily commenced: that it would please all parties, especially those whose condition it more immediately affected, who could expect? that many cases of great individual hardship must occur, is a matter to be lamented; and, on this account, the remedial powers placed in the central board are peculiarly necessary: on the proper and humane exercise of those powers by the appointed guardians much will depend; for the complaints of the poor have been basely seized on and encouraged by designing persons, as means to serve political purposes; and at elections, the men, by whom this patriotic measure was carried, have found it used as a very powerful instrument in opposition to their interests.

From the change effected in the poor-laws, no class of men could eventually expect greater relief than the owners and occupiers of land: these, however, looked after means of alleviating the depression under which they labored, more immediate and direct in operation: the subject of agricultural distress was brought before the commons, in February, by the marquis of Chandos; who, after ably stating both the local and general causes of the evil, moved a resolution, 'that in any reduction of national burdens by the remission of taxes, due regard be shown to that distress which had been alluded to in the speech from the throne.' The chancellor of the exchequer, however, though he admitted

the distress complained of by the agriculturists, contended that it was wrong to hold, that they derived no relief from what had been granted to the other interests of the country: the greatest relief which could be given to farmers would be that which affected the community in general; and to show that, wherever the reduction of taxes or imposts benefited manufactures or commerce, it had also aided agriculture, he instanced the price of wool, which had risen from nine pence to two shillings per pound: he could not agree, that the diminution or abolition of any particular impost would meet the agricultural distress which now prevailed: the small taxes payable by occupiers of land might be vexatious; but they did not press heavily on them; and far greater benefit would accrue from placing the poor-rates on a better footing, than from lightening the weight of direct taxation. Several other members spoke against the resolution, not meaning to deny that the agriculturists were suffering, but considering the resolution as not likely to lead to any result; while the means alluded to by those who supported it appeared neither efficient nor just. The supporters of the motion, again, were far from being of one mind, as to the manner in which relief ought to be afforded: most of them required a repeal of the malt tax; others looked to an alteration in the currency; and Mr. O'Connell boldly proposed to attack the national debt; declaring, that this wisest of nations had ruined the currency one-half, in order to pay with thirty shillings in the pound money borrowed at twenty shillings in the pound: when, however, he talked of the 'cant of national faith,' he called forth general indignation from the house; but more especially from sir Robert Peel, who declared that the honorable gentleman had decided the question respecting a repeal of the union by that preliminary declaration.

As to the motion itself, it implied nothing inconsistent with public faith; for the chancellor of the exchequer had asserted, incautiously and prematurely, that the national revenue was extremely prosperous;

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

and that, accordingly, he held a certain sum applicable to the remission of taxes: he had also observed, that although his own inclination leaned toward a remission of the house-tax, yet he would not repeal that impost; but advised each party to consider the matter, and urge its own particular claims. On a division, the resolution was negatived by a majority of only four in a very full house; and this induced the noble mover to bring forward the subject again on the seventh of July, in the form of an address to the king: in the course of the discussion which ensued, it was declared, that unless the farmers were relieved, so as to enable them to support the poor, it would be altogether impossible for the magistrates, lay or clerical, to maintain peace in the rural districts. The motion was resisted on the ground of its being inconvenient, at so advanced a period, to disturb financial arrangements; but the chancellor of the exchequer held out a prospect of some slight alleviations, such as a removal of the tax from shepherds' dogs, as well as that from windows in farm-houses below a certain amount; and on a division, ministers had a majority of sixteen.

On the seventeenth of March, the question of the malt duty was brought directly before the house by a motion of Mr. Cobbett, one of the members for Oldham, 'that it should cease and determine from and after the fifth of October following.' The grounds on which he justified this proposal were—the great number of persons engaged in, or dependent on agriculture, who were affected by the tax; the expense of collection; the monopoly which it created; and, more especially, its pernicious influence on morals, by preventing the laborer from brewing his own beer, and thus driving him to the ale-house: the motion, however, was resisted, chiefly on the ground, that it would unsettle all the financial measures of the country, and diminish the revenue by £5,000,000, for which no substitute was or could be proposed.

Corn-laws.

But while the agriculturists were thus demanding relief, the corn-laws were not only insisted on, as an answer to all complaints, by those who maintained a

different interest; but were themselves made a subject of formal attack. On the sixth of March, Mr. Hume opened a discussion, which lasted during that and the following day, by moving for 'a committee of the whole house, to take into consideration the corn-laws, (ninth of George IV. c. 60) in order to substitute, instead of the present graduated scale, a fixed and moderate duty on the import of foreign corn at all times into the united kingdom; also to grant an equivalent bounty on the export of corn, with the ultimate view of establishing a free trade in that article.' Our limits preclude us from giving even an outline of the arguments used on both sides of this complicated question, on which several of the members most interested in agriculture voted with the mover, who traced all the existing distress to want of employment; this, again, he ascribed to obstacles which our corn-laws presented to the consumption of manufactures, by raising the price of production, and impeding their export to countries willing to take them in return for corn. Till about 1770, he said, England had been a country exporting grain: since then, the population had nearly doubled itself; and that increase had taken place chiefly in our manufacturing districts: now there was no mode of supporting this population, but by enabling us to supply with those manufactures every part of the world, which would take them for what they could give in return: agriculture could only support a limited number of laborers; but laborers would increase; and unless increasing manufactures were at hand to afford employment, they would be thrown back on the land, and eat up its whole produce, leaving no rent for the landlord: he took it for granted, that the produce of our soil had reached, or nearly reached, its utmost limit; but that our manufacturing population was increasing, might be seen by the increase of exports.

The defence of the corn-laws, he said, had always rested mainly on the necessity of protecting the agricultural interest; but to that interest they were decidedly injurious: the object of the act of 1815,

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1834.

which might almost be said to have passed at the point of the bayonet, had been to keep the price of corn steady; but had it effected its purpose? No: look at the variations which had taken place since that period, running up and down within the limits of forty per cent., such as no provisions could guard against: so that, instead of being advantageous, this act had been really injurious to agriculturists: the landlord suffered under it, and the farmer was obliged to pay the amount even of a reduced rent out of his capital, until he at length became a bankrupt; while the rest of the community were starved through the artificial want thus produced: so uncertain indeed and mischievous was this law found in its operation, that since 1815 twelve acts had been passed, violating its provisions in order to meet emergencies. Another important consideration was the effect which such laws had on our commercial relations with other countries: it had been clearly proved, that the virtual exclusion of our manufactures from American ports, which had caused so much suffering here, was owing to our refusal to admit American corn; in revenge for which they had passed the tariff bill: Prussia, too, finding that we would not take her timber and corn, had shut us out from a great portion of Europe for the last ten years, and had now enlisted Germany in her views: none of our manufactures could penetrate there, except such as were contraband and smuggled: on every sound principle, therefore, the system should be changed for one that would give steady prices, and at the same time permit free commercial intercourse.

Mr. Hume's chief antagonist, on this occasion, was sir James Graham, who spoke at great length in favor of the existing system as necessary to prevent the destruction of an immense body of farmers and agricultural laborers, and with them the dissolution of many other important interests. As no country consumed so much corn as this, he observed, it became absolutely necessary for our safety that the supply should be so constant and abundant, as to permit no other country to injure and annoy us; this point could

only be secured by our home growth, protected by some system like the present; which, by lowering the duty as the price rose, and vice versâ, gave at once protection to the grower and relief to the consumer. Farther, it appeared to him, that we could not adopt the views of Mr. Hume, without abandoning the principles which we followed in other cases; and Mr. Huskisson himself never contemplated this: he never made any attempt at 'free trade;' but only substituted *protecting* for *prohibitory* duties; for instance in the silk trade, which he altered, he left a minimum duty of twenty-five per cent. on some articles, whilst others were protected by duties of forty or fifty per cent. Now his express reason for this was, that our manufactures were burdened with taxes from which those of other countries were free: but in addition to general taxation there were special burthens pressing on agriculture, which required that land should obtain protection; and he enumerated the land-tax; the tithes; the malt duty; county rates, which placed the landlord in the position of a public prosecutor; and poor rates, which, together with the tithe, the legislature itself had declared equal to thirty-three per cent. of the rental. Tithes might be commuted and the poor laws amended; yet they would always leave a heavy charge on the land, however they were shaped.

But it was said that existing laws limited our exports, and consequently the employment of our increasing population: yet under these laws there had been a large increase of exports to all the chief corn-growing countries, the whole of which in the year 1828 amounted in official value to £27,472,000, and in 1832 to £35,216,000. In truth, he said, one of the very first effects of the present measure, if carried, would be to diminish the products of our manufactures, whilst it deprived numerous agricultural laborers of employment: thus our home market, the best source of manufacturing prosperity would decrease, and the manufacturing classes themselves become involved in a common ruin.

He did not undervalue foreign trade; but the

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

foreigner should only be encouraged when native industry was dormant; and no importations should be allowed to supersede the produce of home labor. The question lay in a nut-shell: would they prefer Europe to Ireland and our North American colonies? The present average prices were said to be most injurious to the manufacturing interests: but if tried by facts, if estimated by the standard value of money, the average prices would be found not to have much varied within the last century. After showing from a variety of statements that the operation of free trade had in fact produced fluctuations and occasionally high prices, while the effect of an opposite system was steadiness and uniformity, the honorable baronet went on to attack the principle of the proposed measure, as well as the time in which it was brought forward when our manufacturing classes were in full and prosperous employment. Mr. Hume, he also observed, had admitted, that his proposal would reduce rents thirty per cent.; and he spoke advisedly when he said, that two-thirds of the landed property of England would at once change hands: now, it could not be beneficial to the state that so great an act of injustice as this should take place: hard had been the fate of landholders under the operation of Peel's bill, which had already transferred no small share of the land into the hands of the fundholders, and reduced numerous families, who had pecuniary engagements on their estates, from opulence to beggary: but this would increase the evil to an overwhelming extent; for it would be equivalent to an agrarian law; it would effect a complete change in the existing state of society, by causing the destruction of its most important class; and his solemn opinion was, that the destruction of that class would be the destruction of the state itself. These statements of sir James Graham were answered in a very long and able speech by Mr. P. Thompson, vice-president of the board of trade, in which every argument since used by adversaries of the corn-laws may be discovered; but the motion was strongly opposed by Mr. Baring and Mr. Cutlar Ferguson.

Lord Althorp said, he should meet the motion with a direct negative, though his opinions were favorable to an alteration of the existing system. On a division, it was rejected by a majority of 312 against 155; though the subject was again incidentally discussed, for three mornings, when a petition was presented from Liverpool in favor of free trade, especially that of corn. On this occasion, sir Robert Peel, like his colleague sir James Graham, argued at great length on the gross injustice which would thence accrue to owners and cultivators of the soil, in consideration, not only of the peculiar burdens to which they were subject, but of the protection actually given to manufacturing interests; for the monopoly, with which the agriculturist had been taunted, consisted merely in that sort of protection which was afforded to almost every article of British manufacture, by the imposition of a duty on articles manufactured abroad. Without doubt (he observed) our manufacturers would be happy to witness a free trade in corn; but he doubted much if they would agree to the application of that principle to articles of manufacture. On the other hand, sir Henry Parnell declared, that the pretext of farmers being interested in a continuance of the corn laws, was a gross delusion, practised on them by the landlords; for whose sole advantage the whole community was taxed: this doctrine, however, did not find many supporters; for it would be a still harder case to ruin the landlords, and with them so many other interests extending through all the ramifications of society, for a benefit to the country, which after all is very problematical, if the importance of the home market, the employment of the poor on lands which must then go out of cultivation, the lowering of wages to the *minimum* point, as well as the power of tyranny and exaction in the hands of speculators, be taken into account. In a very artificial state of society, like our own, even a high price of food would not be disadvantageous if means were taken to augment the power of consumption among the productive classes: but even this chance of evil need not be incurred by a paternal

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

government, which would establish public granaries, and itself become an importer of corn.

Those concerned in the shipping interest also complained loudly of distress, which they considered as caused or aggravated by the admission of foreign ships into our ports, on the same terms as those on which our vessels were admitted into theirs; an admission, which the crown had the power of conceding, under the fourth of George IV. c. 77, commonly called 'the reciprocity of duties act.' Many petitions for its repeal were presented; and, on the fifth of June, Mr. G. F. Young moved for leave to bring in a bill for that purpose; but the motion was resisted by ministers, and thrown out by 117 votes against 52.

Financial
statements.

The financial affairs of the present year, notwithstanding the distress of the country, exhibited a very encouraging aspect; for the chancellor of the exchequer, after providing for the interest on £20,000,000 granted to West India proprietors, had a disposable surplus of £1,620,000; but from various alterations about to be made in the state of taxation, with respect to spirits and beer, the estimated surplus might be taken at £1,815,000: on the faith of this, the following reductions were made: in the house-tax, to be wholly abolished, £1,200,000; customs, £200,000; starch, £75,000; stone bottles and sweets, £6000; almanacks, £25,000; small assessed taxes, £75,000; whilst a surplus was still left, amounting to the sum of £234,000.

An important measure of finance was attempted this session, in a plan for the reduction of the four per cent. annuities, created in 1826: all holders of that stock, who should not signify their dissent, were to have, for every £100, three and a half per cent. in a new stock, to be consolidated with the existing three and a half per cent. annuities, which were not liable to redemption before January, 1840. The dissentients amounted to a greater number than had been anticipated; and, in order to provide funds for paying them off, a resolution was passed, on the seventh of June, authorising the commissioners of

the national debt to pay them out of the monies, stocks, or exchequer bills, which they held under 'the saving banks act;' while the dissented stock should, from the tenth of October following, be considered as converted into an equal amount of new three and a half per cents., which were to be vested in the commissioners, and placed in the Bank books to the account intitled 'funds for the banks of savings.' Two motions for the appointment of a select committee, by Mr. D. W. Harvey, and Mr. Strutt, to inquire into abuses of the pension list, were rejected this session by considerable majorities; as also was one by sir W. Ingleby, to repeal the duties on malt; compensation for their loss to be made by taxes on gambling houses and titles, with additional duties on gin and foreign wines. Mr. R. Grant brought in a bill for removing the civil disabilities of the Jews; which passed the commons, but was rejected by the lords; the Archbishop of Canterbury declaring, that it would be a degradation to a christian parliament, if Jews were allowed to legislate for a community of christians. The same fate attended a motion made by Mr. Tennyson for leave to introduce a bill for shortening the duration of parliaments. He had hoped that ministers themselves would have brought this question before the house, as the objection taken to it last session by the noble chancellor of the exchequer had reference only to the unfit time of its introduction. Lord Althorp, being thus appealed to, declared that his reason for having voted on former occasions for shortening the duration of parliaments was, that he then saw no prospect of carrying such a measure of reform as that which had since become the law of the land: a large proportion of the members of that house were no longer nominees of individuals; and it was not desirable now to have them dependent upon every temporary opinion of the people. Mr. O'Connell supported the motion on the principle that short accounts make long friends; but was answered with much ability by Mr. Stanley; who took a complete view of the question. Some few other motions relating to the

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

new state of parliamentary representation were similarly disposed of: but, on the fifteenth of April, those discontents and troubles which were now rife in lower Canada and threatened the very existence of our colonial government there, were brought under notice of the house of commons by Mr. Roebuck, who moved for a select committee to inquire into the political condition of the Canadas: this was met by an amendment from lord Stanley, which was carried; and which, though it appointed a select committee, confined their labors to an inquiry into grievances complained of in the lower province.

Difficulties
of minis-
ters.

The distress felt at this time by all classes was dexterously made use of by the opponents of ministers to render their administration unpopular; so that they became exposed to great inconvenience from a statutory rule of the constitution, which requires, that all members of the house of commons, who accept certain offices under the crown, shall vacate their seats, and take the chance of a re-election: in more instances than one, the candidate thus stamped with the approbation of government, had not been re-elected; and even the attorney-general, having by promotion lost his seat for Dudley, was unable to appear in the house of commons. This was the first practical grievance experienced under the reform act, which had swept away all the close boroughs, and provided no means to compensate the loss: such a state of affairs, therefore, induced sir Robert Heron, without the concurrence or knowledge of ministers, to move for leave to bring in a bill, which might obviate the necessity of members vacating their seats under the circumstances above mentioned. He argued, that prior to the passing of the reform bill, it was necessary that the people should have it in their power to exercise an influence over the crown in the appointment of its ministers; but, since the system of representation had been so much improved, such a check was not only unnecessary, but embarrassing to the free exercise of the royal prerogative: the decisions of the people were frequently rash; and the object of his measure was to guard against

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1834.

the evils of any temporary excitement on the part of constituencies; for no man could now be certain of a return to parliament, unless the general policy of ministers happened to accord with the sentiments of the people. Mr. E. L. Bulwer, being dissatisfied with this reasoning, proposed a plan allowing ministers to hold seats in virtue of their official situations; when there could be no local or temporary causes for not selecting the ablest men: the balance of interests in the cabinet could be at any time adjusted; and there would be a more complete exemption from the undue influence of particular constituencies: but Dr. Lushington and Mr. Ward opposed both propositions, as taking from the people one of the most valuable privileges given to them by the constitution, merely for the purpose of consulting the convenience and safety of the party now in power. Lord Althorp, after assuring the house that this subject had been introduced without the sanction of government, did not hesitate to say that ministers had been put to great inconvenience; but, on the whole, he thought the time was not yet come, when a measure like that now proposed should be pressed on the house: both the motion and the amendment, therefore, were withdrawn. On the fifteenth of August, his majesty prorogued parliament; alluding in his speech with satisfaction to the numerous and important questions that had engaged its attention; more especially to the poor-laws, and the establishment of a central court for the trial of offences in the metropolis and its vicinity; while he directed attention to the important subjects of our jurisprudence and municipal corporations: he lamented the still unsettled state of Holland and Belgium;⁶ but expressed a lively satisfaction at the

⁶ The foreign policy of our government, in giving encouragement, or rather offering no opposition, to the dismemberment of the united kingdom of the Netherlands, has been made a subject of so much party vituperation, that a few words on it here may not seem out of place. Few greater faults were committed, at the end of the war, by the Castlereagh school of politicians, as regarded the commercial interests of Great Britain, than that of forming the junction alluded to. No country possesses greater advantages for manufactures, in its coal beds, its canals, its institutions, and the spirit of its people, than Belgium; whilst Holland is almost unrivalled in fine ports, rivers, ships, colonies, and commercial speculation: each state therefore was peculiarly adapted to the other, and during the

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

termination of the civil war which had so long disgraced the kingdom of Portugal; rejoicing that the state of affairs in the peninsula had induced him to conclude with the king of the French, the queen-regent of Spain, and the regent of Portugal, that quadripartite treaty, which had materially contributed to produce so happy a result. Events, however, had since occurred in Spain, to disappoint, for a time, those hopes of tranquillity in that country, which the pacification of Portugal had inspired.

In fact Spain at this time was subject to the worst evils of civil war, and before the end of the year, Zumalacarregui, the Carlist general, and Mina, the commander of the queen's forces, had begun a system of extermination, accompanied with all those horrid cruelties which mark the Spanish character. In Portugal, whose territory was no longer polluted by the presence of Miguel, Don Pedro was declared regent; but he did not long enjoy the honor; for his health failed, and he resigned the cares of government on the eighteenth of September: in four days afterwards he expired, after recommending the Cortes to dispense with the law fixed by the charter for the majority of the queen: this was done; and on the first of December the young sovereign was married to the duke of Leuchtenberg, son of Eugene Beauharnois, and brother of Don Pedro's wife. The Cortes then passed a bill excluding for ever Don Miguel and his descendants from the succession; passed a decree for the sale of national domains, including that portion of church property which had been confiscated; and another for the substitution of a metallic for a paper currency: but their ingratitude and dishonesty were conspicuous toward their British auxiliaries, by whose aid princi-

union, their combined wealth and prosperity advanced with a rapid progress, diminishing our trade with many European states, and actually annihilating it in several parts of the East. The bigotry and obstinacy of the Dutch monarch, forming a strong contrast to the liberal and just views of his high-minded heir, at length produced a separation, which nothing is likely to heal. Revenge appears now to be the ruling principle among the Dutch, who aim at the ruin of Belgium by every means in their power; and although in this latter country there exists a large party anxious for the restoration of a union which was so productive of mutual advantages, yet the alliance formed by its present monarch with the French family is well calculated to secure the stability of his throne.

pally the constitutional cause had been made triumphant. The political relations of Holland and Belgium still remained in a state of uncertainty on account of disputes respecting the cession of Luxemburg: Switzerland was disturbed through the invasion of Savoy by a band of expatriated Poles: Greece was harassed by the evils both of civil war and political intrigue: France was disturbed by frequent changes of ministry and the efforts of its unruly press: Germany also, particularly Bavaria, was disturbed by agitators; and Frankfort, after being subjected to an attack by armed bands of democratical students, was occupied by the troops of the Diet. It may be remarked, that in the beginning of this year, a treaty was concluded between the imperial and royal plunderers of Poland, the sovereigns of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, mutually to deliver up, on demand, all persons accused of rebellion or treason, or engagement in any plot against the governments of these despotic states. In order to protect his subjects from the contagion of liberal principles, the Russian autocrat published a very severe ukase, to prevent any subject of the empire from residing in a foreign country without permission. In Turkey the ascendancy of Russia, ever on the watch for aggrandisement in this quarter, was increased by an alliance, offensive and defensive, concluded between those two powers; while the sanguinary contest in Syria between the tribes of that country and Mahomet Ali, gave the sultan an opportunity of coming to a rupture with that rebellious pasha, and endeavoring to restore the Egyptian pashalic under Ottoman subjection; but being refused military aid for this purpose by his imperial ally, he was obliged for the present to keep the peace. North America was occupied with the bank question, and the substitution of a metallic currency for paper, and with disputes between the president and senate; while the most shameful riots took place among the republicans of New York, and outrages were committed against the people of color, as atrocious as those with which the old Spanish royalists used to be upbraided. In

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

Mexico, and others of the southern republics, the revolutions and slaughter which generally distinguish such forms of government naturally occurred.

Before the prorogation of parliament, the weakness of ministers, deserted by earl Grey, attacked on all sides by the tories, and abused even by their supporters, the radicals and Irish agitators, had become very apparent: between the end of the session and the month of October, Mr. O'Connell addressed a series of letters to lord Duncannon, in which every species of vituperation was heaped on the whig government; whilst in England, a journal, which had been long conducted with pre-eminent ability, beginning to change its line of politics, drew public attention strongly to a remarkable course of proceedings exhibited by lord Brougham, highly calculated to bring his colleagues into contempt. The death of earl Spencer, taking place on the tenth of November, hastened that dissolution of the cabinet, which could not have been long delayed: as this event removed lord Althorp to the house of peers, it was requisite to find a new chancellor of the exchequer, and a new leader of the house of commons; on Friday, therefore, the fourteenth, lord Melbourne waited on the king, for the purpose of submitting to him some changes in official appointments which earl Spencer's death had rendered necessary: it had, however, long been known, that his majesty was veering round again to the old tory principles of his family; that he entertained no affection toward his present cabinet; and, yielding to the influence of those around him, he thought the time was now arrived when he might safely break it up; accordingly, having expressed, as it was said, his opinion, that lord Brougham could no longer hold the great seal, as well as his dissatisfaction with the selection of those members of administration who were to frame the Irish church bill, he announced to lord Melbourne that he would not impose on him the task of completing official arrangements, but would make application to the duke of Wellington: on the following day, therefore, his grace waited on the king, and advised him

Dissolution
of the
cabinet.

to entrust the government to sir Robert Peel; but, as that statesman, little expecting the honor about to be thrust upon him, had departed from England to visit Rome, the duke offered to carry on the public business provisionally till his return: this course was adopted; and, as a temporary arrangement, his grace was appointed first lord of the treasury, and also sworn in as one of the principal secretaries of state. On the twenty-first, lord Lyndhurst took the oaths as chancellor; but did not resign the office of lord chief baron: lord Brougham, therefore, who had started on a continental tour, wrote to him from France, proposing himself as a candidate for that office, which he offered to accept without any salary in addition to his retiring pension: to this lord Lyndhurst returned a courteous answer, signifying, that no arrangements could be made till the return of sir Robert Peel; and a few days afterwards, lord Brougham, hearing how his proposal had been commented on by his own party, withdrew the request.

On the ninth of December, the son of a cotton-spinner, whom the king had recalled from Rome, that he might make him prime minister of England,⁷—a man belonging to the people by birth and to the aristocracy by education; blessed with strong physical powers, commanding talents, and a princely fortune securing perfect independence—a man, under whom the great duke, the conqueror of Napoleon, was willing to serve,—arrived in London; and on the same day, had an audience of his majesty, to receive the reins of government. One of his first measures was a proposition to lord Stanley⁸ and sir James Graham, that they should become members of the new administration; but they both declined pledging themselves to the extent to which they might be considered bound by such a step; nor did a long time elapse, before it was seen, that although the dismissal of the Melbourne

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

Sir Robert
Peel prime
minister.

⁷ This was the just boast, and high tribute paid to the constitution of his country, by sir Robert himself, in a speech at Merchant Tailors' Hall, on the eleventh of May, 1835

⁸ He had succeeded to this title by the death of his grandfather, the earl of Derby.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

ministry had been received by the nation with undisturbed composure and humiliating tranquillity, yet the tories had been too precipitate in pushing their party back to office: however, it was certain that a new parliament must be assembled; and, until that time, they would at all events possess the sweets of patronage.

By the end of December every official arrangement was completed: lord Lyndhurst retained his place; the earl of Rosslyn became president of the council; lord Wharncliffe, privy seal; the duke of Wellington secretary for foreign affairs, Mr. Goulburn for the home department, and lord Aberdeen for the colonies: Mr. A. Baring was made president of the board of trade; sir G. Murray, master-general of the ordnance; sir E. Knatchbull, paymaster of the forces; earl de Grey, first lord of the admiralty; and lord Ellenborough, president of the board of control: lord Maryborough, the earls of Jersey and Roden, Mr. C. Wynne, and Mr. Herries came also into office: Mr. F. Pollock and Mr. Follett were made attorney and solicitor-general; the earl of Haddington went as viceroy to Ireland, with sir E. Sugden as the lord chancellor, and sir H. Hardinge as chief secretary: sir James Scarlett now obtained the reward of his adhesion to a tory administration, and of his strenuous efforts in the cause of bribery and corruption at Norwich; being appointed to succeed lord Lyndhurst as chief baron of the exchequer, with the title of lord Abinger.

Every man of any penetration saw that this ministry had too much of the old leaven to stand at present: sir Robert, however, who was determined to let the reform bill have fair play, did not despair; but immediately expounded the principles on which he designed to conduct the government, in a long address to his constituents at Tamworth. After observing, that he would not accept power on the condition of declaring himself an apostate from the principles on which he had heretofore acted; and declaring, at the same time, that neither before or after the reform bill, had he been a defender of abuses, or an enemy to judicious

reforms; he thus alluded to that great alterative which had been applied to the constitution:—‘With respect to the reform bill itself, I will repeat now, the declaration which I made when I entered the house of commons as a member of the reformed parliament,—that I consider that act as a final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question;—a settlement, which no friend to the peace and welfare of his country would attempt to disturb, either by direct or indirect means.’ Again, after wisely deprecating such a use of the reform bill, as would lead to a perpetual vortex of agitation, and to the overthrow of ancient rights and institutions, he thus proceeded:—‘If the spirit of the bill implies merely a careful review of institutions, civil and ecclesiastical, undertaken in a friendly temper; combining, with the firm maintenance of established rights, a correction of proved abuses, and a redress of real grievances;—in that case, I can, for myself and my colleagues, undertake to act in such a spirit, and with such intentions.’ Most persons gave due credit to sir Robert for patriotism and sincerity in these professions; but he stood isolated in his own administration: few had that confidence, which he himself professed to have, in its other members; and it was not destined long to last: on the thirtieth of December a proclamation was issued, dissolving the parliament, and convoking a new one, to meet on the nineteenth of February, 1835.

The early part of the new year was occupied by as determined a struggle between political parties as ever occurred in our history: the tories had placed their all on this cast of the die; the Carlton club dispersed its agents far and wide throughout the country; and every engine which aristocratic wealth and ecclesiastical influence could put in motion, was employed in gaining adherents to the conservative cause, and defeating the hopes of its adversaries. In the counties, the £50 clause operated to their advantage, and success generally attended their efforts; but, in the towns, the opposite party had been more attentive to the registration of voters; the middle classes were not

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1834.

General
election.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1835.

willing, that the power with which they had so lately been invested, should be endangered by a tory administration; the radicals made extraordinary efforts to assist the whigs, wherever they had no candidate of their own principles to support; while Scotland and Ireland showed that they had not received the reform bill as a dead letter, but were determined to emancipate themselves, to the utmost extent possible, from a yoke under which they had so long groaned.

Before the meeting of parliament, there appeared in the London Gazette of the third of February, an article, announcing that the king had been pleased to direct letters patent to issue under the great seal, appointing the archbishop of Canterbury, the lord chancellor, the archbishop of York, the earl of Harrowby, the bishops of London, Lincoln, and Gloucester, the right honorable sir Robert Peel, H. Goulburn, C. W. W. Wynne, H. Hobhouse, and sir Herbert Jenner, commissioners 'for considering the state of the several dioceses in England and Wales, with reference to the amount of their revenues, to the more equal distribution of episcopal duties, and to the prevention of the necessity of attaching, by commendam, to bishopricks, benefices with the cure of souls; for considering the state of the several cathedral and collegiate churches within the same, with a view to the suggestion of measures for rendering them more conducive to the efficacy of the established church; also for devising the best mode of providing for the cure of souls, with special reference to the residence of the clergy on their respective benefices.' Thus the administration of sir Robert Peel began to the satisfaction of all honest and reflecting persons, except those who consider the intire revenue of our church unconditionally as private property, and every existing division of it as inalienable from its possessor and his successors for ever: these, however, formed but a small party; for an opinion seemed generally to prevail, that the early death of Edward VI. had left the Reformation incomplete in England; and almost all who wished to see our religious establishment preserved, rejoiced in the

prospect of its purification, while they placed great confidence in the character and good intentions of those who were appointed to superintend this grand design.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1835.

Before the end of January, it had been announced, by the publication of a correspondence between lord John Russell and Mr. Abercrombie, that the latter gentleman would be proposed by the opposition as speaker of the house of commons, the first day of session: on the other hand, it was known that ministers had in view the re-appointment of sir Charles Manners Sutton; and as it was considered that this contest would afford a good indication of the strength of parties in the new house, it was looked forward to with anxious expectation; while strenuous efforts were made on both sides to bring up the whole force that each could command. The result was a larger assemblage of members on the nineteenth of February, the day for which parliament had been summoned, than had ever before been collected. The re-appointment of sir Charles Manners Sutton was proposed by lord Francis Egerton, and seconded by sir Charles Burrell; after which, Mr. W. J. Denison proposed Mr. Abercrombie, and Mr. W. Ord seconded the motion. A debate of considerable length ensued, in which the principal speakers, beside the two candidates, were, for the motion of lord Francis Egerton, lord Stanley and sir Robert Peel; for that of Mr. Denison, lord John Russell: about six o'clock the house divided, when the numbers appeared to be 306 in favor of sir Charles Manners Sutton, and 316 for Mr. Abercrombie; a result, which was received with loud cheers by the majority: the honorable gentleman was then conducted to the chair; and next day, appearing at the bar of the house of lords, he received from the lord chancellor an assurance of his majesty's approval of the choice made by the commons. The late speaker was immediately called to the upper house by the title of viscount Canterbury, and as his pension had been fixed when he was about to retire from the chair, after the passing of the reform bill,

Contest for
the office
of speaker.

CHAP. LXVIII. parliament had no occasion to enter upon this question.

1835.

Opening of
parliament.

Friday, Saturday, and Monday were employed in the administration of the oaths to members; and on Tuesday, the twenty-fourth, his majesty came in state to the house of peers to open the new parliament, under new local circumstances; for the two houses having been last year burned down by the carelessness of attendants in heating the flues, temporary rooms had been fitted up for the accommodation of the British senate. In reference to this catastrophe, his majesty observed, in his opening speech, 'that it was his wish to adopt such plans for the permanent accommodation of lords and commons, as should be deemed, on their joint consideration, most fitting and convenient.' After alluding to the flourishing state of our trade and commerce, as well as of the public revenue, his majesty deeply lamented that the agricultural interest still labored under depression, and earnestly recommended the consideration of it to parliament with a view to relief: having adverted to treaties concluded with his allies the king of the French, and the queens of Spain and Portugal, as well as to various projected measures of domestic policy, such as the state of the Irish tithe question, the commutation of tithe in England and Wales, the improvement of civil jurisprudence and administration of justice in ecclesiastical causes, provision for the more effectual maintenance of ecclesiastical discipline, relief of dissenters in the marriage ceremony, together with the corporation and church commissions; his majesty expressed his confidence in the willing co-operation of parliament, as well as in their caution and circumspection regarding the alteration of laws affecting very extensive and complicated interests, interwoven with ancient usages, and conformable to the habits and feelings of his people.

The address of the lords in answer to the speech was carried without a division, though not without a debate of considerable length, which turned chiefly on the late change of administration: the principal speakers were lord Melbourne, the duke of Wellington, lord

Brougham, and the chancellor; when the duke defended his own conduct against the charge of usurping an unconstitutional power in the late change of administration, while the duke of Richmond and the earl of Ripon expressed an intention of supporting the new government, so far as they could applaud its measures, though they were unable to give it their confidence. The same evening, in the commons, an address was moved by lord Sandon, and seconded by Mr. Bramston; after which, lord Morpeth moved, 'that, in place of the two concluding paragraphs, should be substituted words, expressing a trust, that his majesty's councils would be directed in a spirit of well-considered and effective reform; that in the same liberal and comprehensive policy which had dictated the reform of our representation and the abolition of negro slavery, municipal corporations would be placed under vigilant popular control; all well-founded grievances of the protestant dissenters removed; and those abuses in our church, which impair its efficiency in England, and disturb the peace of society in Ireland, corrected; also representing to his majesty, that his faithful commons begged submissively to add, that they could not but lament, that the progress of these and other reforms should have been unnecessarily interrupted and endangered by the dissolution of the late parliament.' This amendment, being seconded by Mr. Bannerman, gave rise to a debate which lasted three nights: the chief speakers for the original address were, Messrs. Pemberton and Richards, sir Robert Peel, lord Stanley, Messrs. Robinson, Goulburn, and Praed, serjeant Goulburn, and sir James Graham; for the amendment, Messrs. Grote, Poulter, and Ward, Dr. Lushington, lord John Russell, Messrs. Harvey, Fox Maule, and Gisborne, lord Howick, Mr. T. Duncombe, and Mr. O'Connell. On a division, the opposition had a majority of seven in an assembly of 625 members; when sir Robert Peel intimated that it was possible he might take the sense of the house again on the question of bringing up the report; but, next evening, he stated, that after having made due inquiries, he felt convinced

CHAP.
LXVIII.
—
1835.

he could not succeed in that measure: it was understood, indeed, that he would not have been supported in it by lord Stanley; who, in the course of debate, declared that he would go the whole length of the amendment on the subject of corporation reform: his lordship also said, that the omission of any particular notice of that subject, in the speech from the throne, as well as in the exposition of ministerial intentions, which sir Robert had given to the house, induced him to regard the government with a more jealous eye than he should otherwise have been inclined to view it. Lord Howick did not consider that the necessary effect of carrying the amendment would be to remove the present administration; for he should scarcely give the vote he intended to give, if it were likely to have that result; but though he did not desire the immediate retirement of sir Robert Peel and his colleagues, he should regard it as a great calamity if the present government continued without any change. His majesty in answer to the amended address replied, with that promptness and fearlessness innate in his character—‘I learn with regret that you do not concur with me in the policy of the appeal which I recently made to the sense of my people. I never have exercised, and never will exercise, any of the prerogatives which I hold, except for the single purpose of promoting the great end for which they are intrusted to me—the public good.’

On the twenty-eighth, when the order of the day was read for the house going into a committee of supply, the premier stated, in answer to questions put by lord John Russell, that he had not felt it his duty, in consequence of the vote on the address, to tender his resignation; that, with respect to the Irish church, he retained his opinion that ecclesiastical property ought not to be diverted from ecclesiastical purposes, although any measures, not inconsistent with this principle, should have his best consideration; that he had no motive or intention to obstruct corporation reform; and, finally, that in regard to a rumor which had been spread abroad about another dissolution, and

an alleged intention of government, in case the mutiny bill should not pass, to keep up a standing army in defiance of parliament,—the first he never sanctioned, directly or indirectly; and about the second he never heard a whisper, until it fell from lord John's own lips.

The next evening was occupied by discussions respecting the state of Ireland, and bribery at elections; but the sitting on Wednesday produced one of much greater importance to the stability of the administration: this arose from a question asked by Mr. Finn,—whether it was true that 182 addresses from Orange societies had been presented to the king on the twenty-sixth of February, and answers returned to the parties, stating that the addresses had been most graciously received? The question seemed to take ministers by surprise; and the only defence offered to the charge of returning such answers to associations alleged to be illegal, was, that the illegality of Orange lodges had never been judicially declared, and that the addresses had been received and answered merely according to the usual form. On the following Friday, Mr. Shiel moved for copies of the addresses alluded to; also for a copy of a letter written by lord Manners, when chancellor of Ireland, relative to the illegality of Orange societies, and for the opinions of the Irish attorney and solicitor-general on the same point: the latter part of this motion was resisted by ministers, and eventually withdrawn; but the production of the addresses and answers was agreed to.

The first proposal which ministers found themselves compelled to resist, proceeded from one of their own supporters: on Tuesday the tenth, in a very full house, the marquis of Chandos, pursuant to notice, proposed his resolution for the repeal of the malt tax as a source of relief to the agricultural interest: the debate that followed, in which the speech of sir Robert Peel was worthy of all admiration, lasted till near one o'clock in the morning; and when the house divided, numbers were, for the resolution 192, against it 350. On this occasion, most of the adherents of the late ministry voted in the majority; Mr. Charles

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

Wood expressing satisfaction in giving to the present government that support which he and his friends had received, in similar circumstances, from sir Robert Peel: so powerful, indeed, and convincing were the premier's arguments on this occasion, that several members voted with him, who had either pledged themselves at their election to take a different side, or had, at least, induced their constituents to believe they would: this led Mr. Spring Rice to remark, very justly, that pledges were awful things; even when honestly meant, they might sometimes be given in ignorance, and could not be redeemed without a gross violation of duties which honorable members owed to the community at large.

Other important subjects, too numerous to notice, were brought under discussion; among which, was one introduced by the attorney-general for the improvement of our ecclesiastical courts; and an interesting debate took place on the choice of lord Londonderry as ambassador to the court of Russia: this appointment had been denounced even by public journals devoted to the service of ministers; and it was now represented as such an outrageous attack on continental freedom, such a furtherance of the designs of despotism and tyranny, such a confirmation of the foreign policy of the duke of Wellington and lord Aberdeen, that Mr. Shiel introduced the subject by moving for an address to his majesty for a copy of the appointment. Lord Stanley having strongly declared against ministers on the question, there was little doubt of their being left in a minority if they pressed the matter to a division: this course however they prudently declined; and sir Robert Peel stated, that, in fact, no formal appointment had been made; and he certainly did not mean to recommend that the design itself should be persisted in: but lord Londonderry soon relieved ministers from their embarrassment, by voluntarily relinquishing the office; though he vindicated his own character and conduct with great spirit, and was supported by his friend the duke of Wellington.

On Tuesday, the seventeenth, the premier introduced his measure for the relief of persons dissenting from the established church, in regard to the celebration of marriage; and obtained leave, with much satisfaction expressed on all sides of the house, to bring in a bill for carrying it into effect. On Thursday, the nineteenth, the chancellor laid on the table of the house of lords the first report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of the established church; and on the Friday following, sir H. Hardinge, in the commons, brought forward, in a committee of the whole house, the ministerial plan for settling the Irish tithe question. It involved the following particulars:—that, in future, Irish tithes be recoverable only from the chief landlord, or person having the first estate of inheritance in the land; that the owner be intitled to demand only seventy-five per cent. on the amount to which he at present has a right; that the tithe be redeemable by the landlord at twenty years' purchase, calculated on the diminished rate; that the proceeds thus arising be invested in land or otherwise, for the benefit of the tithe-owners; present incumbents to be indemnified against any loss accruing in the amount of their incomes below the seventy-five per cent., but their successors to receive only the income, whatever it may be, which the investment might produce; that all litigation for the recovery of tithes due be carried on through the incorporated commissioners of the ecclesiastical fund; that the repayment of sums granted under the million act be not called for; but that the residue of that sum be farther distributed among tithe-owners, in lieu of tithes due to them for the year 1834, which they may not have been able to collect.

A long debate followed the proposal of these resolutions. Lord John Russell contended that, in principle, they were perfectly identical with the bill introduced last session by the late ministers, and which had been thrown out in the house of lords by the present government and their friends: his lordship said, that of course he had no opposition to offer

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

against the measure. Mr. O'Connell, on the contrary, endeavored to show that the two plans were intirely dissimilar: in point of fact, the main distinctions between them appeared to be, that the bill of last session made to landlords a present of two-fifths of the tithes, or of £40 in every £100; securing to the clergyman seventy-seven and a half per cent. of his legal income, and bringing an annual charge, equal to seventeen and a half per cent. of the whole tithes, on the consolidated fund; while it was now proposed to give the landlords only one-fourth of the tithes; to secure to the clergyman only seventy-five per cent. of his legal income; and to devolve no charge on the consolidated fund: in the course of the debate, such strong objections were taken to the clauses dispensing with the repayment of the sums distributed, and to be distributed, under the million act, that ministers consented to withdraw them. On the twenty-third, the report of the committee was brought up, and the bill, embodying those resolutions which had been agreed to, was read a first time; when sir R. Peel intimated, that he should move for the re-insertion of the rejected clauses relating to the million act at a subsequent stage of the measure: in the course of a conversation which arose out of this subject, Mr. Barron denounced what he described as inconsistency and abandonment of principle in sir R. Peel and his colleagues, whom he charged with being merely actuated by a base desire of office: for these expressions, the honorable member was directed by the speaker to apologise to the house; which he accordingly did. Mr. Finn then brought forward his motion for a select committee to inquire into the nature, extent, and tendency of Orange lodges; which was agreed to without a division.

On Tuesday the twenty-fourth, in the house of lords, a select committee was appointed, on the motion of the duke of Richmond, to consider the subject of prison discipline in England and Wales; and the same evening, in the commons, the house having resolved itself into a committee, sir R. Peel brought forward

his plan for effecting a commutation of tithes in England, by a voluntary agreement between the owner and payer of tithe in each parish; the basis of the plan being the substitution of a corn-rent in lieu of tithe, subject to revision at the option of either party after every period of seven years: a short debate ensued, and a resolution, embodying the leading principle of the plan, was unanimously agreed to. On the twenty-sixth, Mr. Tooke moved that an address should be presented to the crown, for the grant of a charter to the London university; and after a debate of some length, the motion was carried, against ministers, by a majority of 246 to 110. His majesty's answer, which was returned in a few days, stated that the address had been laid before the privy council; and that he would, without delay, call for a report of its proceedings, in order that he might be enabled to judge of the best means of carrying into effect the wishes of his faithful commons.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

On the twenty-seventh, the army and ordnance estimates were carried by large majorities, though not without a fierce struggle with Mr. Hume and his partisans; and on Monday the thirtieth, after the house had been called over, lord John Russell brought forward his motion on the Irish church, in the form of a resolution,—‘for a committee of the whole house, to consider respecting the temporalities of the church of Ireland.’ This motion, which was, as it were, a gauntlet thrown down to ministers, was met by sir Edward Knatchbull with a direct negative; and a debate ensued, which was continued by adjournments over the three following nights: the speakers were numerous on both sides; and after lord John Russell had briefly replied, the house divided about three o'clock on the morning of Friday, April the fourth; when the numbers were found to be, for the motion 322, against it 289. On the evening of the same day the house went into committee on the motion of lord John, who moved, ‘that it is the opinion of this committee, that any surplus which may remain, after fully providing for the spiritual instruction of members of

Defeats of
ministers.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

the established church in Ireland, ought to be applied to the general education of all classes of christians.' When the debate had continued some time, Mr. Peter Borthwick moved an adjournment; but his motion was negatived; and soon afterwards the house adjourned to Monday, the sixth: on that day the debate was resumed, and the committee at length divided; when the resolution was carried by a majority of 262 against 237; and the house then went into committee on the navy estimates. On Tuesday, the report of the committee on the Irish church was brought up, when lord John Russell rose, and moved, 'that it is the opinion of this house, that no measure on the subject of tithes in Ireland can lead to a satisfactory and final adjustment, which does not embody the principle contained in the foregoing resolution.' Another long debate followed, in which it was declared, by Mr. Gisborne, that the protestant church in Ireland, not being in harmony with the feelings of the great majority of its population, was the foundation of all the disturbance, crime, and misery, which prevailed there; and this resolution was a last, and he hoped not a vain or desperate attempt, to save that church by rendering it, if not palatable, at least tolerable: at length the house divided; when the numbers appeared, for the motion 285, against it 258.

Dissolution
of sir R.
Peel's ad-
ministra-
tion.

On Wednesday, the eighth of April, the duke of Wellington in the lords, and sir R. Peel in the commons, declared that their administration was at an end: both houses met subsequently on various days, but without transacting any business of importance; until lord Melbourne announced in the lords, on the eighteenth, that he had been appointed first lord of the treasury, and that the new administration was formed: to a question asked by lord Alvanley, he replied, that he did not know whether he should have the assistance of Mr. O'Connell or not; but that he had taken no means to secure it, and had entered into no terms whatever with that honorable and learned gentleman: his lordship added, that to Mr. O'Connell's opinions, in favor of a repeal of the union and the abolition of

the house of peers, he was intirely opposed: the house then adjourned to the thirtieth of April; but with an understanding, that no public business would be undertaken till the twelfth of May. The same evening, in the commons, Mr. F. Baring moved for new writs on account of vacancies occasioned by the appointment of seventeen members to offices under the crown; and the commons also adjourned to the twelfth of May.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

The new cabinet was composed as follows:—viscount Melbourne, first lord of the treasury; lord Palmerston, lord J. Russell, and Mr. C. Grant, secretaries respectively for the foreign, home, and colonial departments; lord Lansdowne, president of the council; lord Duncannon, privy seal, and chief commissioner of woods and forests; lord Auckland, first lord of the admiralty; sir J. C. Hobhouse and Mr. Poulett Thompson, presidents of the boards of control and of trade; lord Howick, secretary at war; lord Holland, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; and Mr. Spring Rice, chancellor of the exchequer: the great seal remained some time in commission, for the king had a great dread of lord Brougham; but it was finally intrusted to sir C. Pepys, master of the rolls, who became chancellor, with the title of lord Cottenham: sir John Campbell and Mr. R. M. Rolfe were made attorney and solicitor-general; and Mr. Cutlar Ferguson, judge advocate: the earl of Mulgrave went as lord lieutenant to advance the popularity of ministers and the catholic interests in Ireland, where lord Plunkett was made chancellor, and lord Morpeth chief secretary, with Mr. serjeant Perrin and Mr. O'Loughlin as attorney and solicitor-general; both of them patronised by O'Connell, but neither of them distinguished by that turbulence and rabid abuse which characterised their patron: the lord advocate of Scotland was Mr. J. A. Murray. Among other appointments, were those of sir Henry Parnell, as paymaster of the forces, and treasurer of the navy: the marquis of Conyngham, postmaster-general; and marquis Wellesley, lord chamberlain.

Restoration of
lord Melbourne's
cabinet.

Thus the short-lived ministry of sir Robert Peel

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

passed away, not because the premier himself was generally believed dishonest or insincere; but because he was considered as a tool in the hands of men, who flattered only to betray: it was succeeded by an administration, the leading members of which, being taught by experience, were not so liable as before to be caught by the wiles and snares of their opponents: relying on that portion of the community which now possessed the principal share of political power, they determined to pursue a steady course of reform, presenting a bolder front to their adversaries; and the power of public opinion long supported them: dangers however of a complicated kind threatened their stability, which required all their prudence and sagacity to avert: they knew that if they should succeed in weathering the storm, they would probably be able to restore our constitution to a sound state, repairing what was decayed in the fabric, without disturbing its foundation: and if they fell, they would have the consolation to reflect, that few administrations could compete with them in the magnitude and importance of those national questions which they had already set at rest: to effect their ulterior designs, it was necessary to establish their power on a firm and lasting basis; and this was done so effectually, in accordance with a wish expressed by his majesty himself, that the present administration outlived its royal master.

The retreat of sir Robert Peel having thus induced the king to recall lord Melbourne to his councils, he seems to have attached himself, with cordiality and sincerity, to a reforming administration. The new writs in consequence of this change of ministers were moved for, in the commons, on the eighteenth of April, without remark. In the upper house, lord Melbourne, after adverting to the great difficulties which he had experienced in forming his administration, declared his intention of conducting it on principles similar to those adopted in his former government; which, he said, had been to a great extent recognised, confirmed, and strengthened by that which succeeded it. These

were principles of safe, prudent, and efficient reform, whose tendency was not to subvert or endanger, but to improve, strengthen, and establish our national institutions. In answer to some questions relating to the aid, or at least the forbearance of Mr. O'Connell, which he seemed to have obtained for the new administration, his lordship again stated, that he had taken no steps to secure it, nor had he entered into any terms with that individual: with regard to similar interrogatories on the subject of tithes, he did not hesitate to declare, that he considered himself pledged to act on the resolution of the other house.

On the twentieth both houses adjourned till the twelfth of May; and when the new ministers who belonged to the lower house had to be re-elected, several lost their seats: neither lord John Russell nor lord Palmerston could procure one, until parliament assembled; when colonel Fox, the sitting member for Stroud, made room for the former, and the latter moved into the vacated place of Mr. Kennedy, at Tiverton; while the counties of Stafford and Inverness, which at the last general election returned Mr. Littleton and Mr. C. Grant as representatives, now placed conservatives in the room of those gentlemen, who had been called to the upper house by the titles of lords Hatherton and Glenelg.

When ministers explained what they intended to do, it was found that the only measures to be brought forward, were a bill for the reform of municipal corporations; and one regarding tithes in Ireland, founded on the late resolutions of the commons: nothing was to be done in relation to the dissenters, or ecclesiastical reform, commutation of tithes, and church-rates in England; for lord John Russell declared, that if he had learned anything by experience in the last three years, during which he had been a member of government, it was, that ministers frequently fell into difficulties, by undertaking too many concerns; in which, at the end of the session, they could not proceed from want of time for due consideration. Opposition members admitted that it was wiser to proceed with

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1835.

caution, than to advance with measures hastily, and as hastily to abandon them: but they complained, that delay in those above mentioned had formed a subject of complaint in the amendment to the late address; and had assisted in turning out a ministry which had been prepared to bring them forward.

Great changes in the mode of electing municipal authorities, and in the general government of boroughs, had become inevitable from the passing of the reform bill. Even the affairs of parliament did not exhibit such abuses as now came under consideration; for the powers of self-elected municipal councils had been subjected to no popular control; and their secret proceedings being unchecked, pillage by wholesale appeared in the list of vices; many boroughs having been partially, and others utterly, despoiled of their revenues, by those appointed to be their guardians.

In addition to the interest which a reform ministry had in effecting such changes, for securing the influence of their own political party, it was difficult to exclude from the election of the new town-councils, such inhabitants of boroughs, as were trusted with the election of members of the legislature. The boroughs of Scotland had already undergone a fundamental change; the election of magistrates and town-councillors having been vested in the ten-pound householders: and now, in accordance with the recommendation of a committee of the house of commons in 1833, and a commission which had been appointed to inquire into the state of corporations in England and Wales, these also were doomed to undergo a similar system of purification; shocking to those who had grown old in party spirit and involuntary prejudices; who looked with alarm at the doctrines and privileges of new classes; and who, though they might have been naturally benevolent, had no charity for changes of mind and vicissitudes of opinion: such persons had a fair show of reason on their side, when they contended against involving all boroughs, however well governed and prosperous, in one sweeping change, for the faults committed by a few; and they eventually

had some degree of triumph, when it was discovered, that democratic turbulence often succeeded to tory corruption; while party spirit, excluding its political opponents from office, remained as strong as ever.

Proceeding on the recommendation by the committee, lord John Russell, on the fifth of June, detailed the plan of municipal government intended to provide for 183 corporations, including a population of at least two millions: after detailing the unfitness of these bodies to represent the property of the towns in which they were situated, and displaying the abuses by which they had exasperated the general feeling against them—among others a misapplication of charity trusts for the sole advantage of their own connexions; money lavishly spent in sumptuous feasts; shameful encouragement of bribery in the price demanded for votes at elections—the noble mover proposed his scheme of reformation, relating to charters; qualification of electors; aldermen, town councillors, and other officers; pecuniary rights and modes of admission into corporations; administration of justice; and election of borough magistrates.

Sir Robert Peel declared that, reserving all consideration of details, he would throw no impediment in the way of a measure which the circumstances of many towns increasing rapidly in population and wealth, and of others declining in both, as well as the general interests of the country seemed to demand; and which parliament had a right to institute: he objected however to many recommendations of the commissioners; who, he thought, had not sufficiently guarded against the transfer of abuses from one set of men to another.

On the fifteenth of June the bill was read a second time, without opposition; each party conceding the principle that municipal government should be subjected to some degree of popular control; all discussion on the fitness or unfitness of its particular arrangements being reserved for the committee; which began its labors on the twenty-second of June and finished them on the seventeenth of July. The first

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1835.

disputed point arose respecting the boundaries of those boroughs whose limits had not been defined by the act passed for such purpose in reference to the reform bill; ministers wishing to give that power to the king and privy council, which sir Robert Peel, lord Dudley Stuart, sir James Graham, Mr. Goulbourn, and others, considered as belonging rather to the legislature. An amendment on this question was pressed by opposition, but lost against a majority of 87 votes.

A more important discussion took place on the clause affecting the rights of existing freemen, and the future modes of acquiring freedom in corporations. Against the ministerial design, allowing only occupancy and payment of rates to obtain such privileges after the passing of this bill, sir Wm. Follett argued at great length, and with much acuteness; moving an amendment, to the effect of preserving their rights to existing freemen, without interfering with municipal government. Ministers however vehemently opposed it, and carried the original clause by a majority of 44: but the question was again moved by Mr. Praed in a different shape; the tories rallied all their forces in favor of one of their grand principles; and it was now lost only against a majority of 28. Equally unsuccessful was an amendment, moved by Mr. Ponsoby, for protecting inchoate rights of freemen to vote in elections, on account of birth or apprenticeship: also one by sir R. Peel relating to the pecuniary qualifications of common-councillors; and another by lord Stanley, on the clause which made the periods of their election annual, and which his lordship wished to be extended to two years, by which means more steadiness of counsel and greater freedom from caprice would be ensured. A division also took place on the clause which declared the town-clerk removable at pleasure, but which was retained by a majority of 60; and sir James Graham was equally unsuccessful in opposing that which vested in the council a power of granting or refusing all licenses within their borough, and which he considered as inconsistent with a declared object of the promoters of the bill, that of

keeping distinct the judicial and magisterial functions. Every effort made to alter the bill in committee having thus failed, it was read a third time on the twentieth of July; the only hope of amelioration resting on the house of lords.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1835.

Here it encountered a powerful opposition, especially from the duke of Wellington's personal character and weight of argument; and from the legal knowlege and eloquence of lord Lyndhurst. At its second reading many petitions from different corporations were presented, complaining of gross and grievous misrepresentations made by the commissioners, and praying to be heard by counsel against the bill. This being granted, the hearing of counsel began on the thirtieth of July, and was continued on the two following days; the gentlemen who appeared for the corporate boroughs being sir Charles Wetherell and Mr. Knight. When their argument was concluded, lord Melbourne declared that he would oppose any motion for allowing evidence to be adduced in defence of any of the corporations; but, when he moved, on the third of August, that the house should go into committee on the bill, a motion made by the earl of Caernarvon to receive such evidence, was carried against him, after a long debate, by a majority of 70 votes. The house was occupied from the fifth to the eighth of August in hearing evidence, which charged the commissioners with taking their information principally from partisans of their own opinions, from discontented persons easily to be found in all places, or from others on whose word no reliance could be placed; and when this was finished, the house went into committee on the twelfth. The duke of Newcastle had proposed a rejection of the whole measure, but did not press his motion to a division, having ascertained that the conservative peers had resolved to pass the bill; which they thought might be serviceable if stripped of those provisions which appeared to them most operative for evil. Accordingly many amendments were moved and supported, principally by lord Lyndhurst, relating to the rights of borough property, and privileges vested in freemen

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

and their descendants—to the preservation of their elective franchise as secured by the reform bill—to the qualification of town-councillors—to a fixed proportion of councillors holding office for life; in all of which ministers were defeated by large majorities; whilst others relating to justices of the peace, to the division of boroughs into wards with an appointed number of councillors to each, to the ecclesiastical patronage of corporations, and to the retention of the power of determining burghal boundaries in the hands of parliament instead of the king in council, were carried without much discussion or any division: and though one, relating to the town-clerks holding office during good behavior, was opposed, it also was carried by a majority of 104 to 36.

The amended bill was passed by the lords on the twenty-eighth of August, ‘mutilated and spoiled,’ if the assertions of ministers were to be believed; and its amendments were brought before the commons on the thirty-first by lord John Russell, who complained much of the mode of proceedings adopted by the upper house, which had gone into inquiries and listened to speeches directed merely to abuse the house of commons, and disparage the new electoral body. The question however was, whether the bill, even as thus altered, might not be moulded into an efficient instrument of good municipal government. Though he objected strongly to the appointment of town-clerks for life, and still more to that of aldermen; as well as to the retention of borough magistrates, who were so now by virtue of their offices; yet he did not intend altogether to dissent from the amendment regarding the division of towns, or the qualification of property, or the reservation to existing freemen of their parliamentary franchise and their share in common lands; though he objected to limit the exercise of ecclesiastical patronage to those members of the councils who might belong to the church of England.

Ministers were severely blamed by the radical party for lowering the dignity of the house, and disappointing the wishes of the nation, by conceding too much to

the peers; who, it was said, ought to take warning from the signs of the times. 'Why,' observed Mr. Roebuck, one of the members for Bath, 'should the real representatives of the people bear the insults of so weak a body, when they have the power to crush it? Having reformed themselves, was there no other body that required the excision of the knife? He was an advocate to the utmost for *democracy*; and the sooner they brought this matter to an understanding the better:' luckily, however, the sentiments of this raving democrat found but few admirers either in the house or among the people, who retain too great a love for their ancient nobility and institutions, to wish that they should be trod under foot by a *democracy*, that worst of all *tyrannies*. The amended bill was discussed with great candor and temper, chiefly through the good sense, as well as good intentions, of lord John Russell and sir Robert Peel: being returned to the lords, the amendments of the commons were taken into consideration on the fourth of September, and were agreed to with a few exceptions; though the peers still retained their original amendments, providing that justices should be named directly by the crown; and that a division into wards should begin with boroughs containing 6000, instead of 9000 inhabitants. The commons agreed to the bill as sent back to them, on the seventh of September, when it was passed as it now stands; an effective instrument for sweeping out one chamber in the den of corruption: and though the whigs, by following the exclusive system of the tories, have occasioned a revulsion of feeling, and thrown back many boroughs into the hands of their political antagonists, yet it must be confessed, that the main sources of corruption are destroyed.

While the municipal bill was occupying attention in the upper house, the commons were considering the other important measure to which ministers had limited themselves for this session; a bill for regulating the Irish church. This, introduced by lord Morpeth, on the twenty-sixth of June, did not differ much from what had been proposed by sir Robert Peel's govern-

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

ment; it being intended to convert the existing composition for tithes into a rent-charge equal to seven-tenths of the amount of composition; the cost of collection being thrown upon the tithe owners, relieved as they would be from all risk and trouble. A mode also was proposed for creating a surplus by the suppression of benefices; and a clause was introduced, providing that the consolidated fund should immediately begin to make an annual payment of £30,000 for the purposes of general education in Ireland, on the faith of this anticipated surplus. The bill was read a second time without discussion, and passed the commons; but we need not enter at any length into its details, because it was ultimately abandoned by ministers, when the lords, who had agreed to its clauses for the reduction and collection of tithes, carried a motion for striking out those for the suppression of benefices and the appropriation of their funds. One consequence of this abandonment was a bill brought in by the chancellor of the exchequer, on the twenty-ninth of August, empowering government to suspend, under certain conditions, its claims for repayment of an instalment advanced to the Irish clergy, due on the fifth of April, 1836: as this bill was calculated to remedy great hardship, it passed both houses without opposition. But it was not only with the Irish church that ministers were involved; owing to the position in which they stood with dissenters, who oppose the application of public money to the payment of any party merely because its creed is that of the majority, an annual grant of £10,000 to the established church of Scotland, which had been recommended by sir R. Peel, was now coldly received; being referred to a commission of inquiry, who might report 'how far the building and endowing places of worship in Scotland is required for the moral and religious instruction of its lower orders:' but as soon as the names of the commissioners were known, the general assembly in Scotland expressed much dissatisfaction, and transmitted a strong remonstrance to government: this, however, produced no change in the commission, though

it drew another strong protest from the assembly's committee.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

Another subject which engaged parliamentary attention was the establishment of Orange lodges, more especially those in the army, wherein the duke of Cumberland and colonel Fairman, did not figure very advantageously: these practices drew down upon them the merited indignation of Mr. Hume; and a select committee was appointed to inquire into their extent and tendency. As usually happens after a general election, the house had to deal with many petitions, the result of which did not materially affect the comparative strength of parties; though a flagrant instance of bribery at Ipswich, which unseated the sitting members, showed a determination in the tories, to adopt any expedients for the restoration of their lost power. Proceedings also were taken against witnesses for evading service of summons, and against others for refusing to answer. Mr. Grote made his annual motion in favor of 'vote by ballot;' and ministers were strongly urged to protect themselves and the liberal party by this measure against the powerful interests arrayed against them: but there were found 317 members, in a house of 461, unwilling to sanction a measure so adverse to the feelings of Englishmen, and to the spirit of our constitution. At the opening of the session numerous notices had been given for committees, or for leave to bring in bills, bearing more or less on the constitution of parliament; for preventing bribery and corruption; for reducing expenses at elections; for protecting electors against that system of intimidation which was now carried to a disgraceful height; and for indemnifying witnesses giving evidence in cases of bribery. In some instances, committees were granted; but the only legislative measure carried through, was a bill altering the reform act, so far as to allow two days for taking votes at a contested election, and limiting the poll to one day unless it should be necessary to adjourn it in case of a riot. The polling places were to be arranged so that not more than 300 electors should poll at one booth; which

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

number might be reduced to 100, on the application of a candidate or elector; such party paying all additional expenses. During the session a motion, introduced by Mr. G. Berkeley, passed the lower house to admit a certain number of ladies into the gallery during debates; but it was very ungallantly opposed by lord John Russell, and lost by a majority of thirty when the committee came to make their report, on the fourth of August.

Agricultural distress was extensively prevalent this year, while the average price of wheat was not more than forty shillings a quarter. Cheap corn, it was found, did not introduce plenty and enjoyment into the rural cottages, but was rather accompanied by excessive destitution; for an alleviation of which the poor, in many localities, were indebted to the removal of multitudes into the manufacturing districts. Hence it was argued that if cheap corn, when produced by the exertions of our own population, fails to increase the comforts of the lower orders, importation of foreign corn must augment the evil tenfold by transferring the demand for British labor to Poland, and making Russian serfs the means of cheap food in England. Such circumstances led the marquis of Chandos to bring this subject before the house, in a motion to reduce the pressure of local burthens under which the agricultural interest was laboring; but, when pressed to a division, it was lost by a majority of 211 votes to 150. In the course of this discussion, some members repeated the opinion so often expressed by one party in the house, that all the evil had arisen from the resumption of cash payments, and could only be cured by some alteration of our currency. On the first of June this opinion was embodied in a motion by Mr. Cayley, one of the Yorkshire members, for the appointment of a select committee of inquiry, which was rejected by a large majority; as also was that made by sir Samuel Whalley, to repeal the window-tax, one of the most intolerable burthens under which the poorer classes labored. The whole system of taxation was brought under notice on the twelfth of June

by Mr. Robinson, member for Worcester; but the motion founded on it was rejected by 105 against 42 votes; the mover complaining, that, while party and personal questions absorbed the attention of the house, and filled its benches, any motion relating solely to the general benefit of the people, was met by an appearance of indifference or apathy, well fitted to discourage any man from undertaking the task. An alteration was made in the duties on tea; government resolving to fix the duty on all teas at 2s. 1d. per pound; but postponing its operation till July, 1836, that it might not affect the teas on hand, or orders sent out to China. The exchequer had likewise to provide, during the present session, for payment of that large sum voted to West Indian planters, as a compensation for the losses to which the abolition of slavery would expose them: but as this payment was, in some measure, contingent on the fulfilment of certain conditions of the emancipation act, Mr. Fowell Buxton on the nineteenth, moved for a committee of inquiry, but was resisted on the part of government by sir George Grey, and withdrew his motion. A motion also to repeal stamp duties upon newspapers was resisted on the ground of financial difficulties, though the propriety of such a measure, under different circumstances was readily conceded.

It was not till the fourteenth of August that the chancellor of the exchequer was enabled to bring out his budget. After alluding to the reductions already made in taxation and expenditure, he mentioned several temporary charges in the present year which would swell the estimates; instancing those on account of fires which had destroyed our houses of parliament, and injured the Dublin docks; compensation given to one class of Danish claimants; and £10,000 voted to Polish refugees; also various sums for the revising barristers, for education in our West Indian colonies, for the relief of sufferers by the dreadful hurricane at Dominica, and for antiquities purchased by the British Museum. The total of these sums was £436,000; which might be looked on as an extraordinary charge;

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

interfering, however, with any plan for reduction of taxation which might otherwise have been contemplated.

In stating his estimate for the ensuing year, ending in July 1836, he calculated our national income at £45,550,000, and our expenditure at £44,715,000, leaving a surplus of £835,000; though he regretted that this would crumble away before the farther statement which he was compelled to make, respecting interest due on the West Indian loan, which would probably reduce the available surplus to about £150,000 or £200,000. Under these circumstances, although he entered into various details to show the increasing prosperity of the country, he could not promise any great reduction in taxation. The reduction made was confined to the impost on licenses for the sale of spirits, which had been increased fifty per cent. by lord Althorp; to the duty paid on flint glass, now reduced from sixpence to twopence a pound; and to the relief of Ireland from the stamp duty now chargeable on awards, which amounted only to £500 per annum; but which operated to prevent the lower orders from resorting to that mode of terminating disputes. These resolutions were agreed to by the house without a division.

The only one of our colonies which particularly claimed attention from parliament, was that of Canada, distracted by the French or democratic party, which had gained a majority in the house of assembly, and determined to control both the legislative council and the governor. Mr. Roebuck, member for Bath, a perfect representative of their opinions, and a paid agent for advocating their cause in parliament, presented a petition on the ninth of March, setting forth their alleged grievances; which lost nothing in virulence by passing through his hands: among these were the appropriation of funds for the education of catholics, to the support of the established church; and the conversion of the jesuits' college into military barracks—the establishment of the land company, under a grant from the crown, which interfered with the rights of Canadian subjects—the tenures act, which was stated

CHAP.
LXVIII.
—
1835.

to be another attempt to interfere with the internal regulations of this colony—and the rejection, by our colonial secretary, of a bill passed in the legislative assembly, for rendering the judges independent of the crown, and paying their salaries out of the reserved territorial fund. Much abuse also was vented against lord Stanley, as well as against the Canadian governor, lord Aylmer: Mr. Roebuck also declared the legislative council of the colony to be a moral pest; and that the people were justified in demanding one, formed agreeably to their own desires, and over which they could exercise some species of control. ‘If this were not done,’ he added, ‘Lower Canada would inevitably follow the example of the United States; nigh at hand were 13,000,000 republicans, who, as soon as the flag of rebellion should be unfurled, would rally round it, and trample our whole establishment in the dust: a separation of the two countries would be a lamentable thing; but if the present pernicious course of governing this colony was to be continued, he declared, that the sooner the Canadians got rid of our dominion the better.’

Mr. Spring Rice and lord Stanley, after noting the bad tendency of this language, vindicated the general conduct of our government; which, so long back as 1828, had appointed a committee to examine into the complaints of the Canadians; which committee had honestly and indefatigably probed all grievances to the core, and suggested adequate remedies for every evil. Its recommendations had met with warm praise even from the popular party in Canada; but it was much to be regretted, that the state of political matters at home had prevented its recommendations from being duly considered and carried out. Complaints, irritation, distrust, and misconception between the government and assembly ensued, which ended in ninety-two resolutions of the legislative assembly brought before parliament last year. A new committee was then appointed, of which Mr. Roebuck was himself a member: every document in possession of the colonial office was laid before it;

CHAP.
LXVIII.
—
1835.

agents sent over by a majority of the house of assembly were admitted to substantiate their charges; Mr. Roebuck was distinctly asked whether he had any thing more to state, and lord Stanley whether there was any thing from government to submit; when this committee made a general report, to which Mr. Roebuck himself, who now blamed government, was a consenting party—‘that the most earnest desire has existed on the part of the home government to carry into effect the suggestions of the committee of 1828; that its endeavors to that end have been unremitting, and guided by a desire in all cases to promote the interests of the colonies; and that in several important particulars their endeavors had been intirely successful.’ Sir Robert Peel, who was at the head of administration when this discussion arose, said, ‘that the recent change of ministers had not prejudiced the consideration of this question, nor was it likely to delay its settlement. The subject had already occupied the attention of the colonial secretary; and his majesty’s government lost no time in signifying an intention of definitively settling the dispute, and authorising lord Aylmer to lay before the house of assembly such information as ought to lead to the most satisfactory results; giving him full discretionary powers, to save time and prevent inconvenience, or fresh embarrassments. Ministers, however, were not prepared to declare any new principles of government, though ready to review the several causes of complaint, ascertain their justice, and redress every real grievance in a spirit of conciliation: in such a spirit they were determined to proceed, regardless of menaces, and feeling assured, that, in the event of a resort to arms, America would not join our rebellious colonies.’ The result showed what reliance was to be placed on American democrats, or the restraining power of their federal government.

On the tenth of September his majesty brought this long session to a close by a speech, in which, after stating the friendly assurances of foreign powers, and his endeavors to terminate the evils of civil war which were desolating the northern provinces of Spain, he

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1835.

congratulated the nation on the treaties which he had induced Denmark, Sweden, and Sardinia to sign for the extinction of the African slave-trade, expressed his approbation of the reform effected in English municipal corporations, and spoke of a happier state of things as existing in Ireland, where the severity of penal enactments had been suffered to expire.

Although the radicals and Irish catholics, by a junction with the whigs, had enjoyed the triumph of expelling a conservative ministry, yet so steadily had the encroachment of democracy been counteracted by the upper house of parliament, that no success appeared likely to attend them, while this constitutional bulwark was allowed to retain its authority, as well as its place, among our institutions. Motions were accordingly announced in the lower house by Messrs. Roebuck, Rippon, and Hume, for curtailing its powers, which were denominated abuses, and for rendering the house of peers a fit and proper instrument of legislation—that is, of such legislation as might be approved of by democrats.

On the rising of parliament Mr. O'Connell commenced a progress, or mission, as he termed it, to propagate this doctrine in the north of England, and among the presbyterians of Scotland: but the arch-agitator was doomed to meet with a signal disappointment; being wholly discountenanced by the respectable classes of society, and applauded only by the ignorant rabble, or by partisans whose opinions and views were in unison with his own: the result therefore of his crusade and his virulent invectives, injured not only his own cause, but that of the ministry of whose alliance he had boasted, and whose interests, as identified with his own, he had pretended to be serving: the good sense of the country now took alarm, and most thinking persons, among those who desired to see our institutions purged from dross, became still more anxious to retain the gold.

In the beginning of the present year intelligence was received from the Cape of Good Hope, relating to irruptions by the Caffres, which exposed some of our

CHAP.
LXVIII.
—
1835.

settlements to much danger; whilst in our West Indian islands, the great experiment of relaxing the laws relative to slaves, came into operation, without realising the gloomy apprehensions of those who feared lest stubborn idleness with all its attendant evils might succeed to compulsory labor: some instances of bad conduct, arising chiefly from ignorance of the law, occurred; but these were easily subdued by the magistrates and police force; except indeed in Jamaica, where a stronger spirit of insubordination led to the farther evil of involving the legislature of that colony in disputes with its executive; principally because the demands of the planters for a larger number of stipendiary magistrates had been refused; though at last conceded. When sir Robert Peel entered on office, he found that nothing had been done in Lower Canada since the committee of the commons had made their report in July, 1834; and the irritation of the French or democratic party had been increased by a dissolution, whilst its power was not diminished by the result of the new elections. Lord Aylmer therefore was recalled, merely because the relation in which he stood to the popular branch of the colonial legislature, obstructed a settlement of the question; though this step was viewed by the constitutional party, and even by a portion of the more respectable French inhabitants, with regret; as a sacrifice of the royal prerogative to the clamors of a faction opposed to the authority of Great Britain. Ministers however having resolved to send out as governor a person, who should also be authorized, as his majesty's commissioner, to inquire into and redress all real grievances, they selected lord Amherst for that important post; but just at this time the Peel cabinet was dissolved; and the arrangement of Canadian affairs left to that which succeeded it: in the mean time the colonial legislature had been assembled after a new election in the beginning of the year. The assembly of the previous year, in a spirit of revenge, because government had refused a bill to render elective the upper house, had refused the funds necessary to carry on public business; and the salaries

of all public servants were in arrear: for this, and other urgent reasons, lord Aylmer, under the instructions of our colonial secretary, had advanced £31,000 from the military chest; and this, as an unauthorised expenditure of public money, was now added to the list of grievances. A large majority of the new house belonged to the political party of its predecessor: Mr. Papineau, the head of that party, was again elected speaker in opposition to government; and the first measure of the house, even before taking into consideration the governor's opening speech, was to pass a resolution for expunging from their journals that with which he had closed the preceding session; on the ground that it implied a censure on their proceedings in having transmitted petitions, complaining of ninety-two grievances, to the British parliament; and that such censure was an infringement of their privileges. In the address voted in answer to his speech, they insisted on the illegality of money having been advanced, which they had not appropriated; and repeated that demand regarding a change in the constitution of the legislative council, which had rendered a refusal of the supply bill unavoidable: the strong terms which these remonstrances employed, were confirmed by immense majorities of the house.

In the mean time, while they left the civil service of the colony, and even the administration of justice, unprovided for, they passed 'the agent's bill,' for paying a salary of £600 per annum, and £500 for contingencies, to Mr. Roebuck, as their parliamentary agent in England; which measure was properly thrown out by the council, as intended to promote the very destruction of that body. Their next step was to provide for their own expenses; and on the third of March, they voted an address to the governor, to sanction the appropriation of £18,000 for payment of arrears and current allowances to members, together with some other contingent charges: and when his excellency answered, that, as matters stood, this request demanded grave consideration, and appeared to involve constitutional questions of grave import, oppo-

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1835.

sition members abandoned the house; so that on the nineteenth of March he was under the necessity of adjourning the session.

On the restoration of the Melbourne cabinet, it adhered to the plan determined on by the preceding administration; but instead of vesting the powers of commissioner in the government alone, it appointed lord Gosford to the latter situation, at the head of a commission consisting of other members. These commissioners arrived at Quebec about the end of August; and the new governor met the legislature on the twenty-seventh of October; when he addressed the two houses in a long speech explaining those purposes for which he had been sent in his double capacity; and setting forth the remedies which he was authorized to apply to several of their alleged grievances—such, for instance, as the preference of the English language over the French, and that of British Canadians over those of French origin, for public offices—the holding of incompatible offices—the non-communication of despatches between the colonial and home governments—interference in elections—the calling for extra-judicial opinions from the judges on matters which might subsequently come before their tribunals—the too frequent reservation of bills for the signification of his majesty's pleasure, and too great delay in communicating his decision. His lordship stated that he was authorized to sanction the grants for their personal expenses, which had been reserved for consideration; and, also to place under the control of the representatives of the people, all public monies payable to his majesty, or to his provincial officers, which arose from taxes or any other Canadian source; observing however that this cession could not be allowed, except on conditions to be maturely weighed; to arrange which was one of the chief objects of the commission at the head of which his majesty had placed him.

After various other topics, his excellency, in allusion to the disputes between the two houses, concluded by holding up to imitation the conduct of the peers and commons of England, in regard to municipal corpora-

CHAP.
LXVIII.
—
1835.

tions; whose differences of opinion had been always accompanied by mutual forbearance and respect. He did not announce any intention of conceding to the party in opposition the conversion of the legislative council into an elective body; but neither did he declare frankly and decidedly that this point would not be yielded. It formed, he said, one of those topics which the commissioners would take into consideration, and after full evidence and information, would submit, with their conclusions, to his majesty.

The house of assembly however in their address did not suffer this last subject to be evaded; but strongly pressed upon the governor's attention an extension of the elective principle, and its application to the constitution of the legislative council,—also a repeal of the acts passed in Great Britain on matters relating to the internal government of the province, and interfering with the privileges of their provincial legislature—both being essential to the prosperity and happiness of Canadians, as well as to the maintenance of their attachment to the British crown. They received with pleasure the concession of a more extended control over the revenue payable to his majesty; but carefully avoided giving any pledge for paying the £30,000 which government had advanced; and rather hinted that such a demand was fitted to disturb the harmony which his excellency was so anxious to establish: their first act however was to repeat the useless insult offered to the legislative council, by sending up again the agent's bill for the appointment of Mr. Roebuck. The council feeling that they could not, without compromising their own respectability, sanction intercourse with a man who had declared that body to be a nuisance, and pay for a firebrand out of the public purse, rejected the bill; on which occasion the house of assembly at once gave the appointment to Mr. Roebuck; and resolved to pay his salary out of the public money allowed to them for their own contingencies.

The detail of these disputes relating to Canada will leave us less room for that of foreign and domestic occurrences; but it was absolutely necessary for

CHAP.
LXVIII.
—
1835.

enabling the reader to understand the peculiar relations at this time existing between the mother country, and that important colony, which led to subsequent events of deepest interest. Canada, indeed, may be considered as the grand western branch of that enormous empire, held by Great Britain in the two hemispheres; an empire larger than any which the world ever saw; and one calculated to excite the envy and jealousy of all other nations. The strength of Canadian attachment to Great Britain, weakened by the French catholics who were left in possession of their territorial rights at our conquest, and endangered by the contiguity of American democrats, was now to be tried; and it was perhaps fortunate for Great Britain that these disputes came at this time to a head, and occasioned an outbreak, which not only disclosed all the insidious designs of our American neighbors, and proved the staunch loyalty of British settlers, but stimulated the general apathy of government, to attempt that reform in our colonial legislation which is absolutely necessary to maintain our colonial supremacy. It is almost impossible to overrate the importance of her colonies to a great naval power like that of England; more especially as the increased cultivation and prosperity of foreign possessions is rapidly advancing the power and resources of rivals, which are already found to embarrass us in our commercial and political negotiations. During a fearful struggle of nearly a quarter of a century, what more than her colonies enabled her to resist all antagonists, by manning those fleets which bore her flag triumphant over the ocean, and supplying her with pecuniary resources from the vast trade which they carried on under her direction? In the event of any future war, similar resources will be required, in proportion as other European nations, and particularly those of North America, advance in colonial prosperity. England, said one of her greatest statesmen, never can have a *little war*; neither can she exist as a *little nation*: she must march in the first rank, or sink rapidly into the lowest: to avoid this fate, she must cherish and main-

tain those vast colonial possessions, which give employment to her capital and afford profitable outlets to her manufactures: while she rules these possessions with kindness and discretion, it will be long ere they desire to throw off her maternal yoke for self-government; nor, while she commands the sea, can any foreign power take them from her: they can have no schemes of rivalry opposed to her commercial prosperity; and whenever the policy of *free trade* comes to be seriously discussed by our legislature, this question ought to be considered as one of momentous importance—whether it be better to make large concessions to our colonists, who must naturally be grateful for commercial advantages, or to rivals and foreigners, who, like M. Guizot, laugh at our simplicity and retain their own prohibitory duties. France during this year was agitated by state-trials, by legislation for limiting the licentiousness of a press which threatened to subvert all the principles of government, and by an attack on the king's life, in which marshal Mortier and many other individuals were slain: the assassin was a Corsican named Fieschi, whose atrocious act is too notorious to need a particular description. No rest from strife and massacre yet came to miserable Spain, torn and distracted by military revolts, and juntas usurping the powers of government; though our cabinet this year made some effort to mitigate the evils of this wretched country, by sending lord Elliot on a benevolent mission to induce both royalists and Carlists to abstain from putting their prisoners to death. A new feature however in the civil contest was the arrival of a British auxiliary legion, which colonel Evans, a distinguished officer in the great peninsular war, consented to command. Portugal this year saw the marriage of its young queen, as well as the termination of that celebrated Methuen treaty by which its commercial intercourse with Great Britain had so long been regulated; also a convention, made in a better spirit than that which generally actuates the peninsular councils, was concluded with Spain for a free navigation of the Douro by the subjects of each

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

country through which it flows. The states of Holland were occupied in improving their judicial system, endeavoring to remedy the depressed state of agriculture, and planning an arrangement of the Belgian debt; while the Belgian chambers confined their deliberations chiefly to the protection of their cotton manufactures by prohibitory duties, and of internal tranquillity by the passing of an alien bill.

Prussia, strong and prosperous both in her foreign and domestic affairs, proceeded to bring to a conclusion her grand scheme of uniting all the Germanic states in one body, so far as the duties on exports and imports were concerned: the whole frontier of Germany toward France was now comprehended in the Zollverein, except the free city of Frankfort and the duchy of Nassau. The former of these territories, surrounded by the custom-houses of the new Union found it desirable to send an agent to London, about the end of this year, to remove, through negotiation, the only obstacle to its junction; which lay in a commercial treaty lately concluded with Great Britain. Such an envoy was not likely to find much difficulty with our government; which for several years past has resigned nothing with greater equanimity than the European markets for exports: in the mean time the removal of old restrictions, and the opening of free intercourse between the Germanic states had already begun to develop numerous sources of wealth in every part of that extensive empire, which till this time were comparatively unknown. All this taught the Germans to appreciate the advantages of free and unrestricted commerce; and had they reasoned well, they might have learned, that the same principles, from the adoption of which among themselves they were reaping such advantages, required only to be carried out to an intercourse with other nations, in order to secure still greater benefits: but blind to the true cause of their nascent prosperity, no sooner did the manufacturing interests acquire sufficient importance to influence the policy of the union, than all their efforts were directed to increase the protective duties on their respective

products, and thus re-establish, under a different form, the restrictions from which they had recently freed themselves. Austria lost by death her emperor; but in retaining prince Metternich at the head of government, she retained all her peculiar influence in the European confederation. Nothing occurred in the minor states of Germany which calls for special notice; but a remarkable interview took place at Warsaw between the Polish authorities and the emperor Nicholas, on his return from interviews with the Prussian and Austrian monarchs at Kalisek and Toplitz; when the autocrat addressed the deputation in a calm, severe, and taunting speech, declaratory of the rigorous and inflexible principles on which Poland was to be governed; plainly avowing that she was thenceforth to be treated as a Russian province. Under the peculiar circumstances of this unhappy nation, without leaders or union at home, and cut off from the assistance, if not from the sympathy, of foreign governments, it would have been fortunate for her, if her rulers and people had paid greater attention to much sensible, judicious, and even kind advice, mingled in the stern reproofs and threats of their imperial despot.

At the end of last year the seat of the Greek government had been transferred from Nauplia to Athens, with a view to the approaching majority of the boy-king; that leaden weight placed on the nascent energies of Greece by the very nations who had done so much for the purpose of bringing them into action. On the first of June, this year, Otho I. assumed the reins of government; and scarcely had his first proclamation announced blessings of all kinds to his new subjects, when almost all offices in the state were transferred from Greeks to Germans; native troops were disbanded and replaced by Bavarian regiments; the national revenues were perverted to the most unconstitutional purposes; while dissensions and consequent insubordination arrived at such a pitch, that the king of Bavaria himself thought it expedient to visit Athens, for the purpose of aiding his son by personal influence and advice.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
—
1835.

Turkey, by the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, had been laid prostrate at the feet of Russia; which latter power exercised almost uncontrolled authority over the divan; whilst England and France, whose short-sighted policy led to this result, were soon made to feel that Russia did not mean to let her influence lie unexerted; for a passage into the Black Sea, secured to her by the above mentioned treaty, was denied to armed vessels of the other two countries; and our ambassador, lord Durham, when he arrived at Constantinople in a British man-of-war, on his circuitous journey to St. Petersburg, was obliged to transfer himself and his suite from the Barham to an unarmed vessel. Insurrections, so common in this disjointed, ill-governed empire, disturbed the tranquillity of Albania, Servia, and Kurdistan; while Mahomet Ali, secretly and openly assisted by French agents, was consolidating that power over the Syrian provinces wrested from his liege lord, which afterwards led to such important consequences. In Persia a civil war arising from the rival pretensions of the sons of Feth-Ali Khan, who died last year, a war of which Russia would scarcely have failed to take advantage, was stopped, by the wise and able conduct of our envoy sir John Campbell.

During this year the government of North America, after much blustering, received proposals, which were subsequently accepted, for the mediation of Great Britain to settle her disputes with France;⁹ though with true democratic insolence and injustice she rejects even the *award* of mediators on disputed points with her mother country. A report, however, from the secretary of her treasury this year, disclosed a fact, which deserves to be recorded among the most extraordinary circumstances in modern statistics,—the complete payment of her national debt—unless indeed the repudiation of her debts subsequently contracted, should appear still more extraordinary; an act which has indefinitely protracted the development of her resources, and bound her to keep the peace in a still stronger bond

⁹ These regarded the payment of losses sustained by American subjects under pretext of the Berlin and Milan decrees.

than that with which our unrepudiated debt represses the warlike energies of Great Britain. With regard to the internal affairs of a land pretending to freedom, we may observe, that atrocious massacres and insurrections against parties who advocated the abolition of slavery, exhibited that habitual contempt for law, which exists in this country, whenever passion or interest may desire to throw off its restraints. The states of the southern continent were still distracted by dissensions, insurrections, plots, and treasons, which it were lost time to notice, farther than by pointing to them as examples how fatal to real liberty and public tranquillity are republican institutions. The tranquillity of that slave-importing empire Brazil, was this year disturbed by an extensive insurrection of its negroes; and Bahia was exposed to those dangers from which violators of the eternal laws of justice must never expect to be free.¹⁰ Among the domestic occurrences of our own nation during this year, few are found to deserve particular notice.

The first report of the church commission, relating to episcopal dioceses, revenues, and patronage, was given in; as also was that of the commissioners of public instruction in Ireland. With regard to the king, political parties sometimes insinuated an indifference in his mind toward the interests of our reformed protestant church; which his majesty unequivocally contradicted by his energetic replies both to the laity, and to the clergy in convocation; while this year, though his increasing infirmities did not permit him to accompany her, his amiable consort paid a visit to our most ancient seat of theological learning at Oxford; where her majesty, accompanied by the grand duchess

¹⁰ No nation in either hemisphere has carried out its slaving propensities to a higher pitch than Brazil, ungrateful for benefits and unmindful of stipulations, promises, or treaties with Great Britain: moreover by matrimonial alliances it happens that this degraded empire has fixed its roots in so many royal and imperial families, all anxious to keep up its hatred toward Great Britain, and to cut off its commercial ties with her, that we can scarcely hope for an European ally to join with us in extirpating this odious traffic. Yet a new light has sprung up, and new hopes, and new allies, even in the slave-holding and slave-breeding states of North America, who are becoming decidedly hostile against slave importation and ready to join us in its suppression; especially as there exist some ancient treaties by which both England and America can treat Brazilian slave-traders as pirates.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1835.

of Saxe Weimar, was received in the theatre, by the duke of Wellington, and other high officers of the University; degrees in civil law were conferred on several personages in her suite; nor were loyal addresses from the university, the city, the county, and the diocesan clergy, omitted. After holding a drawing-room, and visiting the most remarkable buildings in this magnificent seat of learning, the queen proceeded by way of Blenheim, for the rival warrior's seat at Strathfieldsaye. Previously to this, on the third of August both their majesties went in state by water, accompanied by the lord mayor and other civic authorities, to visit Greenwich hospital; where they were loyally welcomed by sir Thomas Hardy, the companion and friend of our immortal Nelson; who conducted his royal guests through the numerous apartments, where every thing connected with the comfort of their brave occupants was accurately inspected by the 'sailor king,' and elicited his warmest approbation.

Having adverted to this splendid asylum for the veteran defenders of our sea-girt land, I consider it an imperative duty to call public attention to the lamentable state of neglect under which that other branch of naval service, our merchant marine, has long lain. Surely while we are so ready to build galleries for paintings, museums for natural history, and halls for science, we might afford a little philanthropy to prepare an asylum for those who go down to the sea in frail barks, and encounter perils in the great waters far more appalling than are met by those who ride over the waves, comparatively secure in Britannia's floating bulwarks: yet these men, to whom the safe conduct of our vast commercial wealth is intrusted, are in case of old age, or a worn-out constitution, generally consigned to hopeless penury. There is scarcely a subject which more deserves the attention of an enlightened statesman than this: but such an one must not confine his exertions to the building of a hospital: the whole system of our merchant service demands great improvement and reform; more especially in the employment of proper vessels, and the

appointment of proper and efficient officers, whose authority ought to be defined with some degree of certainty; for as the case now stands, the masters of merchant vessels may be, and too often are, the greatest tyrants on earth; and the atrocities they commit against their crews almost exceed belief; nor is any verification of a log required at the end of a voyage, nor is any journal open for the insertion of observations by the mariners. In the royal navy the authority of the captain is so circumscribed by the rules of the service; so checked by his inferior officers, all men of education; and so modified by his own self-respect, that his subordinates are in little danger from its exercise; while, on the other hand, the master of a merchantman is often the only person even of moderate education in the ship; his inferior officers being but little raised in this respect above those who work the vessel: and if, at the end of a voyage, such a man is charged with the most atrocious cruelties, public sympathy always goes with him; the tender-hearted officers of our police courts, seem to throw every possible difficulty in the way of a deposition, and exact the smallest bail; while even the judges on our tribunals look with very merciful eyes on his case: but let a poor wretch of a mariner be charged with an offence on the high seas, and the whole field is up against him with the cry of mutiny; a severe example must be made; and gross injustice is often committed. These are long-standing evils; and to some of them we owe those lists of wrecks with which in this and other countries extensive lines of coast are often covered. Our merchant navy is larger than the fleets of the whole world combined: why should such an arm of power be any longer neglected?

CHAPTER LXIX.

WILLIAM IV. (CONTINUED.)—1836.

Opening of parliament and king's speech—Addresses, &c.—Measures relating to Ireland—Leading measures relating to England—Ecclesiastical commission, &c.—English municipal act—Free conference—Bill to allow counsel to felons—and to remunerate medical witnesses—For abolition of imprisonment for debt—Bill regarding a division of the office of lord chancellor—Acts and motions of Mr. O'Connell, &c.—Agricultural distress, &c.—Motion by the marquis of Chandos relating to it—Other motions—The budget—Affairs of the Mauritius—Discussions on the Canadian discontents—Affairs of foreign nations; Spain, Poland, Russia—Proposals for an address to liberate the prisoners at Ham—Affairs of Greece—Close of the session—King's speech—Affairs in Ireland—Affairs of Canada—Jamaica—France—Spain and Portugal—Holland and Belgium—Germanic diet—United States—States of South America—Domestic occurrences—Death of lord Stowell—Private life of their majesties—State of parties at the beginning of 1837—Opening of parliament by commission—King's speech—Address, &c.—State of Ireland—Protestant meeting in Dublin—Motion for a bill to amend the Irish municipal corporations—Debates thereon; discussions upon lord Mulgrave's government—Debates on the Irish municipal bill—Poor-laws for Ireland—Irish tithe question—Irish national education—Question of church-rates—Ministerial plan for their abolition—Conduct of sir F. Burdett—Failure of church-rate abolition scheme, &c.—Motions for many organic changes in the constitution; and failure of them—Debates on the poor-law, and committee of inquiry—Canadian affairs—State of the banking system and money concerns—Crisis in the American trade, abuses, &c.—Foreign policy of the whigs, especially regarding the peninsula—Affairs of Russia; the United States, Mexico, and Texas—Colonial affairs; Canada, &c.; Jamaica; New South Wales—France—Spain—Portugal—Austria—Germany—Belgium and Holland—Switzerland—Italy and Sicily—Sweden and Norway—Greece—Russia and Circassia—Turkey—United States—Mexico, &c.—British parliamentary affairs—State of

parties—Speech of Mr. Roebuck against ministers—Views of
 ministers—Illness and death of the king—Proclamation of queen
 Victoria.

CHAP.
 LXIX.

1836.

ON the fourteenth of February, his majesty opened parliament by a speech of unusual length, in which after testifying his satisfaction in meeting its members, and giving the usual assurance of friendly relations with the various European powers, he alluded more particularly to the intimate union happily subsisting between this country and France, which he considered as a pledge to Europe for the continuance of peace. He then expressed confidence in the happy result of his mediation between France and the United States; also his deep anxiety, and measures taken, to stop the civil contest raging with such violence in Spain; at the same time intimating that he had given directions for a treaty to be laid before them, concluded with the queen of that country for the suppression of the slave-trade. Congratulating them on the state of commerce and manufactures, he felt obliged to lament, and recommended the adoption of measures to alleviate, the distress still existing among our agricultural classes. His majesty then alluded to a farther report of the church commission which was in a state of preparation; to a plan intended for their consideration regarding commutation of tithes: he recommended them to consider whether measures might not be framed to remedy any grievances which affect those who differ from the doctrines or discipline of the established church; and whether some amendments in the administration of justice, more especially in the courts of chancery, might not be devised. He trusted that they would be able to effect a just settlement of the question regarding Irish tithes; as well as a reformation of municipal abuses in that country, on principles similar to those which guided them in legislating on the like abuses in England and Scotland. After alluding to a farther report from the commission of inquiry into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland, soon to be laid before them, he concluded by expressing a firm reliance on their prudence, wisdom,

and determination to maintain, as well as to amend, the laws and institutions of their country.

In the upper house, the address was moved by the duke of Leinster, and seconded by the earl of Burlington; and the only part of it, to which any objection arose, was the passage expressed in the royal speech relating to Irish corporations; in which it was recommended, that they should be reformed 'on principles similar to those in the acts passed for England and Scotland.' These words raised at once a leading question between contending parties; for those acts established a £5 franchise in one country and a £10 one in the other: but to follow this example, would be to transfer to the papists that monopoly of municipal authority which had hitherto been enjoyed by protestants. The duke of Wellington therefore strongly protested against any such pledge, and proposed an amendment, to the effect 'of their proceeding without delay to consider any defects or evils shown to exist in these institutions, for the purpose of applying remedies to all just causes of complaint.' He was answered by lord Melbourne; but other peers having supported his grace's amendment, and the defeat of the government appearing inevitable, if the question went to a division, the marquis of Lansdowne declared that ministers were not unwilling to leave out the objectionable clause, which was never intended to pledge the house; and with this concession the amendment was agreed to.

As the government felt itself stronger in the lower house, a similar objection there did not find the same spirit of concession: to the address, which echoed the speech, and was moved by sir John Wrottesley, seconded by Mr. Parker member for Sheffield, sir Robert Peel made an objection similar to that of the duke of Wellington; which he supported by cogent reasons, and concluded with a similar amendment; in which he was opposed by lord John Russell, lords Howick and Palmerston, and Mr. O'Connell; being supported by lord Stanley, Mr. Hardy, and Mr. Shaw: the question was here pressed to a division; when the

original address was carried by a majority of 284 votes against 243. CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

As Ireland had thus presented the first subject of debate, so it continued to furnish, during this session, the principal topics to which public attention was directed, because they were those in which the opposing parties most fiercely assailed each other. Mr. O'Connell and his adherents lost no time in returning to their attacks on the Orange societies; when, after much vehement discussion, an address was agreed to and presented to his majesty; who on the twenty-fifth of February returned a gracious answer, expressing ready assent to its prayer, 'that he would be pleased to take such measures as may seem to him advisable for the effectual discouragement of Orange lodges, and generally of all political societies excluding persons of a different religious faith, using secret signs or symbols, and acting by associated branches.' After this expression of opinion the obnoxious societies generally acquiesced; some with greater and others with less readiness; but all setting an example, which cannot be said to have been followed by the many mischievous associations set on foot by popish demagogues, to extend their political and religious power, in defiance of our legislature.

The next measure regarding Ireland involved to a far greater extent the relation in which protestants and catholics were to stand towards each other. After the reform of municipal corporations in England and Scotland, it was manifest that a similar demand would be made for Ireland; where the question would assume a more difficult and important character, involving religious as well as political considerations. To open the Irish corporations would be not merely the enlargement of a political franchise, but a transfer of all power from the protestants who had hitherto exercised it, to the great body of papists: both parties might be equally admitted in name; but, in practice all boroughs would be brought under the control of catholic ecclesiastics and demagogues; while the powers of municipal government would be placed in the hands

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

of a population too ignorant and rude to use them well: but although this danger was obvious, the example had been set in England and Scotland; the rule had been laid down; and a royal commission had made a report very unfavorable to the existing state of municipal government in Ireland, concluding with these words: 'As at present constituted, they (the corporations) are, in many instances, of no service to the community; in others, injurious; in all insufficient, and inadequate to the proper purposes and ends of such institutions: the public distrust in them attaches to their officers and nominees; while the result is a failure of respect for, and confidence in, the ministers of justice and police.'

Proceeding on this report the attorney-general for Ireland introduced a bill for the better regulation of municipal corporations in that country; the evils and abuses of which he proposed to remedy by placing them, as had been done in England and Scotland, under effective popular control, and annihilating their partial and exclusive character. It is hardly necessary to enter into a detailed account of this measure; which, after long occupying the attention of parliament, and stimulating Mr. O'Connell and his adherents to raise a violent clamor for justice to Ireland, was finally lost on the thirtieth of June; when the amendments of the lords were rejected by the commons. The same fate befel the other great party question, respecting the commutation of Irish tithes; a measure which ministers resolved to re-introduce in the same shape which it had borne the previous year; not only containing those provisions for diminishing the amount, and regulating the collection of tithes, which removed their pressure from the occupier, and prevented collision between the payer and receiver; points on which all parties were agreed; but clogged by the appropriation clause, which had been so strenuously resisted in the commons, and rejected by the lords. The resolution of ministers was, that however expedient and proper the other provisions of this measure might be, they ought not to be adopted unless

accompanied by a declaration of the principle of appropriation; nothing less than which would satisfy the Irish papists. Their opponents answered, that the other provisions of the intended act would produce practical good, and remove all cause of complaint, except such as was directed against the existence of tithes in any shape; that the declaration of what was called the principle of appropriating a surplus was an absurdity, when no surplus existed; and that it was mischievous, because its necessary consequence and true meaning was, that a surplus, which did not exist, must be created by plundering the protestant church: that, even if a surplus did remain, after duly providing for that church, it ought to be appropriated only to protestant ecclesiastical purposes; and that, if it was true that Irish papists would not be satisfied unless some part of these funds were appropriated to other purposes, the true meaning of this was, that it was to be the first step in a design for overturning the protestant establishment altogether.

Undeterred by the fate of the municipal bill, and the general tendency prevailing in the kingdom to uphold the house of peers in its resistance to the encroachments of popery, ministers committed to lord Morpeth the task of introducing this measure into the house of commons; which he executed on the twenty-fifth of April, by moving a resolution which in itself tended to raise no party question; being merely,—‘that it is expedient to commute the composition of tithes in Ireland into a rent-charge, payable by the owners of estates; and to make further provision for the better regulation of ecclesiastical dues and revenues.’ The opposition agreed with government on the principle of commutation; but his lordship, in opening the scheme which ministers intended to incorporate in their bill, announced that the principle of appropriation would still be declared and acted on. In regard to the future regulation of the church revenues, government, he said, felt that they could not abandon those declarations and principles which they proclaimed when they entered upon office; that they could not

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

shake off an engagement to which they considered themselves pledged, of doing justice to the Irish nation; the terms of which honorable compact they conceived to be, that if in a future disposition of the Irish church revenue, something more than its legitimate and becoming uses require should arise, they ought, after the satisfaction of all existing interests, to apply that superfluity to the religious and moral education of the whole Irish people.

The above resolution being unopposed, a bill founded on it was brought in; but its second reading was delayed by ministers till the first of June; apparently with a view of ascertaining, by the fate of their corporation bill, what hopes they could entertain for the success of their appropriation principle. On that day lord Stanley moved, as an amendment, for leave to bring in a bill 'for the conversion of Irish tithe into a rent-charge; and for the redemption thereof; and for the better distribution of ecclesiastical revenues in Ireland.' In this it was stated, that the principle of appropriation would be utterly abandoned: but after long debates, his lordship's motion was rejected; while that of ministers passed for a second reading by a majority of only thirty-nine; a number so small as necessarily to seal its fate in the house of lords. On the motion for its going into committee, the ultimate designs and real wishes of the papists, which their more wily leaders either disclaimed or kept in the back ground, were openly disclosed by Mr. Crawford, member for Dundalk; and in committee the great Irish leader betrayed an angry conviction, that it would be impossible either to pass the bill, or to make it an instrument for raising any popular excitement against the other house. The only debate in committee arose on the question, whether the appropriation clause should stand as part of the bill; since the opponents of the measure were determined to give the peers every support in their power; and on a division, in a house of 554 members, ministers could only obtain a majority of twenty-six votes; while the opposing minority contained a majority of English repre-

sentatives. In this state of opinions, the ministerial bill was read a third time, and passed, on the fifteenth of July.

CHAP.
LXIX.
1836.

In the upper house its second reading was moved on the twenty-second; and, after a brief explanation of its provisions by lord Melbourne, was agreed to without any division: on the twenty-fifth the house went into committee, and passed the bill on the twenty-eighth: but in the mean time they had made it, by overwhelming majorities, what the large minorities in the lower house had endeavored to make it; striking out all its provisions for the appropriation of surplus, and modifying many of its most important arrangements. Thus amended, the bill was rejected by the lower house, and fell to the ground.

The leading measures of this session, as far as regarded England, were all connected with the alleged grievances of dissenters: they consisted of a bill for the commutation of tithes; of another for the celebration of marriage by persons not belonging to the communion of the church of England; and a third for the registration of births and marriages. The first two subjects were by no means new: the necessity of commuting tithe had been frequently discussed; and sir R. Peel, during his short administration in 1835, had introduced, for that purpose, a bill with which the government that followed him did not proceed: his predecessors had proposed a measure for regulating dissenters' marriages; but it had been withdrawn, because it proved unpalatable to the parties chiefly concerned: a bill on the same subject had also been proposed by sir Robert Peel, and approved by those parties; but this also was dropped when he retired from office. The present ministers now undertook to deal with all these three subjects; and the bills which they brought in, though amended in the upper house, were passed, and finally became laws.

The ecclesiastical commission, appointed during sir Robert's administration, and continued by his successors, for the purpose of discovering if any useful changes could be made in the condition of the English

CHAP.
 LXIX.
 1836.

church, so as to remove its anomalies, and secure its more effective pastoral superintendence, had made two reports; and the recommendations which they contained, arranged themselves under three heads; first, the ecclesiastical division of territory, and revenues of the different sees; secondly, the cathedral and collegiate revenues, which it was desirable to render more useful for our establishment; and, lastly, the avoidance of pluralities, and the residence of clergymen upon their benefices. A bill was brought into the house of lords, by the archbishop of Canterbury, to carry into effect the recommendations of the commissioners regarding pluralities and non-residence;¹ while lord John Russell introduced another into the lower house founded on those recommendations which regarded the re-modelling of episcopal sees, respecting territory and revenues; a third measure being brought in, at a later period, to carry the reports fully into effect, by providing for the suppression of various cathedral and collegiate preferments, as well as sinecure benefices. The second of these bills occasioned long and vehement debates, especially between ministers and the radicals; the latter being unwilling to see any improvement made in a system which they desired to overthrow: but, notwithstanding all opposition, it passed into a law; and ministers deferred the other bills, for reducing chapters and collegiate churches, suppressing sinecure benefices, and altering the distribution of ecclesiastical patronage. A short act however was passed, in order to prevent the creation, in the mean time, of more vested interests: by another the secular jurisdiction of the bishops of Durham and Ely was transferred from those prelates to the crown; and a bill 'for imposing certain restrictions on the renewal of leases by ecclesiastical persons,' passed into a law.

When the English municipal act came into operation, it was soon found that some of its details required amendment; and a bill for such purpose, introduced early this session, passed the house of commons; but

¹ In this was a clause for incorporating a board of commissioners, under the title of 'the ecclesiastical commissioners of England.'

when it came to a second reading in the upper house, the duke of Wellington and lord Lyndhurst pointed out the grave examination and careful consideration which many of its enactments required. This led to certain amendments; to all of which, when the bill returned to the commons, they agreed, with the exception of two—the first relating to the election of a mayor or alderman in certain cases; the second, and more important one, consisting in the insertion of a clause to continue for another year an arrangement contained in the municipal act, for the management of charitable trusts. No part of these new institutions had produced greater jealousy and feuds; the popular party who had seen the misappropriation and ruinous dilapidation occasioned by those who formerly held them, being eager to obtain possession; while the others, who put but little faith in the impartiality or honesty of democrats, insisted on some arrangement being made, which would prevent charitable funds from becoming prostituted to party purposes. It was mutual jealousy which prevented the final settlement of this matter in the municipal act itself, and left these funds in the hands of those who then held them, till the first of August, 1837; unless parliament, in the mean time, should make a different provision for them; and if it did not, then the lord chancellor was to appoint new trustees.

Mr. Smith, member for Southampton, had accordingly brought in a bill, for the administering such trusts by a system of popular election; but it had not passed through committee when the present municipal bill was sent up to the peers; and it proceeded on a system which was not likely to be sanctioned by them: hence they had inserted the amendment relating to these trusts in the bill; to which clause, as well as to the other regarding the election of mayor and aldermen, the commons, on a motion of the attorney-general, refused to agree; and their reasons for this refusal were communicated to the lords, at a conference in the usual way. These reasons were taken into consideration by the peers, but had not sufficient

CHAP.
LXIX.
1836.

weight to turn them from their amendments; or to prevent them from throwing out Mr. Smith's bill, on the second reading, by a majority of 39 to 22.

As the commons still adhered to their rejection of the two amendments made by the lords in the municipal bill, the only course left for them to pursue, was to demand a *free* conference; at which the matter in dispute is, or may be, debated between the managers, *vivâ voce*: this accordingly was asked for, on the tenth of August; but on account of the novelty of the proceeding, of which no instance had occurred since 1740, the consideration of their message was postponed till next day, when the desired conference was granted: but much to the dissatisfaction of Mr. Hume and others, who had expected a warm debate, it passed off without any discussion; and a motion made by lord Lyndhurst,—that the house should insist on its amendments,—having been carried, a message was sent to the commons, requesting a *free* conference to communicate that result. The managers for both houses immediately met; the question of the amendments was regularly debated; but the discussion ended, as might have been expected, by each party retaining its previous opinions: accordingly, on the motion of lord John Russell, all farther consideration of the amendments was postponed till that day three months; and certain bills were brought in and passed, to supply some parts of the dropped bill, on which both houses were agreed.

The attempts, which had been made, more than once, to obtain an act for allowing felons the benefit of counsel to address a jury on their behalf, were attended with success in the present session; as also for altering the existing law respecting the execution of murderers; the new statute simply enacting, 'that sentence of death may be pronounced after conviction for murder in the same manner, and the judge shall have the same power in all respects, as after conviction for other capital offences.' Another bill passed to remunerate medical witnesses brought before coroners' inquests: but a more important one, to abolish im-

prisonment for debt, was postponed at its second reading in the lords, on account of the advanced period in the session, and the weight of business pressing on the house. In accordance with a passage in his majesty's speech, the lord chancellor, on the twenty-eighth of April, brought forward a measure relating to the high office which he himself held: the great evil of the court of chancery was the want of an individual at its head, who could devote his time intirely to the performance of his judicial functions, without being called off to other duties; and to remedy this he proposed to divide the office of chancellor; distributing his employment between two judges, one of whom should be devoted exclusively to legal duties, and be irremovable, while the other retained the political functions and official patronage; coming in, and going out, with the ministers who appointed him. This measure, however, as well as a second bill connected with it, regarding the appellate jurisdiction of the house of lords, was thrown out, on a division for its going into committee; having been strongly opposed by the duke of Wellington, as well as by lords Abinger and Lyndhurst.

Much also of the time of parliament, this session, was occupied in considering the expensive and defective constitution of election committees—also with the extraordinary transactions of Mr. O'Connell respecting the representation of the county of Carlow; which reflected no great credit on the character of that gentleman; who, together with his colleague Mr. Ruthven, was unseated for Dublin, on the report of that election committee: against this a petition was presented, and rejected by the house; but the county of Kilkenny returned the great agitator to St. Stephen's; where, no long time after a motion made by Mr. Rippon, 'for expelling bishops from the house of lords, under the plea of their attendance being prejudicial to the cause of religion,' had been rejected, he gave notice that on the twenty-first of June he would move for leave to bring in a bill to reform that house itself by making its members elective: this announcement was received

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

with shouts of laughter; nor did Mr. O'Connell himself seem to be in earnest with his motion; which he postponed from time to time, and finally announced his intention of moving for a committee early next session.

The complaints of the agricultural classes, which, for several years had annually come before parliament, still continued, accompanied by speculations, as various as ever, regarding the causes of this distress and its remedies. The enthusiastic advocates of free trade held, that a removal of all duties on the importation of grain would benefit the grower no less than the consumer: some proposed an alteration in the existing system of our currency; and others thought that no relief would be found but in a reduction of rents, and of those taxes which were supposed to press peculiarly on agriculturists. Government took up the question early in the session, and wisely suspended the discussion of many questions relating to this topic by proposing the appointment of a select committee; on the ground, that, whenever any great branch of national industry becomes materially depressed, it is the duty of parliament to consider the facts of the case, and endeavor to apply a remedy: at the same time little hope appeared that the distress of the agriculturists could be removed by legislative interference; and in the course of debate it was denied, that, because ministers had proposed a committee, they were bound, as had been alleged, to be provided with any specific plan.

Before, however, any report of the committee could be given in, this distress of the agriculturists was brought forward, in another shape, by the marquis of Chandos; who urged the house to express its opinion that, in any reduction of taxation, the interests of agriculture ought particularly to be kept in view: he asked not for a partial, but for an equal distribution of burthens; declaring that during the last five years the amount of taxation repealed was upwards of eight millions; of which only half a million bore directly on landed interests, the overwhelming mass being distri-

buted among the manufacturing classes; while these latter did not suffer from many imposts, which pressed most heavily on the farmer.

Lord John Russell objected to the motion, both on its own merits, and because he thought it premature to entertain such a question before the agricultural committee, then sitting, should have given in its report. A motion was made for repealing the additional duty on spirit licenses, as well as for reducing the pension list; and on the sixth of May the chancellor of the exchequer opened his budget. He first entered into a comparison of the actual amount of income and expenditure for the past year, with that at which they had been estimated; showing that, while nothing had fallen off from what he had anticipated, except about £24,000 in the miscellaneous estimates, on the whole revenue of the year the receipts had exceeded the estimates by £838,000: still in the actual expenditure, there had been an excess over the estimates of £134,000; but this was capable of explanation.

For the present year he estimated the expenditure as follows; still setting aside the West India loan. The charge on the consolidated fund, and for the interest on our national debt, would be £30,620,000; being £94,000 below the expenditure of last year: the army also would cost less by £154,000, the estimates being £6,327,000; but the navy would cost considerably more, because five thousand additional seamen had been voted, at a charge of £434,000, raising the sum this year to £4,680,000. The ordnance for the year he estimated at £1,263,000; being £10,000 lower than that of last year. The income of the preceding year had been £46,381,000: for the present year he reckoned its amount at £46,980,000; while the total expenditure would be £45,205,807, leaving a surplus of £1,774,193: but out of this apparent surplus, payment must be made on account of West India compensation during the year, to the amount of £1,111,633; leaving only the sum of £662,000 to be dealt with by parliament: from the state of the revenue, had it not

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

been for the sums payable to West Indian planters, there would have been a surplus of two millions.

In applying this surplus to the reduction of taxation, he should select those taxes, the repeal of which would extinguish a source of fraud, rather than such as merely afforded present relief. He proposed therefore, in the first place, to consolidate the paper duties and reduce their present amount, while he repealed the whole duty on stained paper, which otherwise would pay doubly: this with a diminution of about £20,000 in the post-office department, consequent on the convention with France, a small diminution in probate duties, and a reduction of £10,000 in the South Sea annuities, would extinguish above £200,000 of the surplus; the balance of which he intended to apply chiefly to the reduction of stamps on newspapers. The duty on these at present was fourpence, *minus* the discount; which he proposed to reduce to one penny and to allow no discount: he did so, to protect the revenue; since the sale of unstamped publications had become so extensive, that no series of prosecutions could put them down; the loss arising from this reduction, supposing it calculated on the whole year, would amount to £200,000; but it would only accrue during three quarters of the financial year; and an enormous increase of revenue would take place from the enlarged circulation of newspapers, duties on advertisements, and general consumption of paper. He next proposed to take off the duty from insurances on farming buildings, as lord Althorp had taken it from farming stock; also to give up certain small branches of revenue, as the duty on taxed carts, and the additional fifty per cent. on spirit licenses; for which latter he would find an equivalent in the increased consumption of spirits. The amount of all the taxes which he proposed to remit would be £351,000, this year; though, when the proposed reductions came into full operation, it would amount to £568,000: but when the increased consumption of paper was taken into account, the money collected from penny stamps, and the increase of

advertisements, he did not expect to lose more than £530,000 during the second year.

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

Though the application of a great part of our surplus revenue, to the reduction of stamps on newspapers, was branded by many as a sacrifice to the demands of a political party; and, in the debates which ensued, a reduction in the duties on soap, instead of it, was strenuously advocated, yet these proposals of the chancellor of the exchequer were, with a few alterations, assented to; and the number of newspapers which now circulate through the British dominions is almost incredible.

For a considerable time unfortunate differences had prevailed in the Mauritius, between a portion of its inhabitants and the government authorities; and between one part of the people and another: they were said to have originated in the desire of the white population to evade some requirements of the law for negro emancipation; and were believed to have been aggravated by what was termed, on one side, the indiscretion, and on the other the honest determination of the colonial judges: more than one recal of such had taken place; and the consequence was, that their successors, who did not pursue the same course, and the governors of the island, were denounced as guilty of abusing their powers to prevent a full and fair execution of the emancipation act. Mr. Roebuck, the colonial agent for Canada, with much more of justice now on his side, extended his protection to the people of the Mauritius; and moved in the house of commons on the fifteenth of February,—for a select committee to inquire into the administration of justice in that colony. He stated that from the time of its cession to us in 1814, a party hostile to the power and supremacy of Great Britain had arisen, on account of her resolution to put down the slave trade, and ameliorate the condition of the slave population. She had declared this trade a felony; and issued an order in council, to the effect that no governor, judge, registrar of slaves, or person connected with the administration of justice, should hold any species of slave property, directly, in

CHAP.
LXIX.
1836.

trust, or in mortgage. Now he charged the whole body of those functionaries with holding slave property: he charged sir Charles Colville, the late governor, with speculating, and creating debts, in slave property: he charged chief justice Blackburne, the officers of the supreme court, and nearly all the functionaries of the island with the same gross violation of that order; proof of which was to be found in the despatches of government. At the time when the earl of Ripon was colonial secretary, the local authorities, intrusted with the task of making certain alterations in the island code of law concerning slaves, had so executed it, that the secretary plainly charged them with having acted in a spirit of bad faith, to protect the seditious, and disobey the injunctions of government at home. Armed associations were formed, ostensibly for the defence of the whites; but really to throw off the dominion of Great Britain: also a committee was formed, who became the true governors of the isle; and no one had a chance of obtaining justice, unless he were connected with one or both of these bodies.

‘A registration of slaves had been ordered, for the purpose of discovering if any had been illegally imported since our reception of the colony; and the burden of showing the legality of the property was properly thrown on its holders: but the slave-masters rose almost in open rebellion, to prevent this regulation from being carried into effect. In such an excited state of the island, Mr. Jeremie was sent out as *procureur-general*; when the governor and executive officers, conscious that they had been violating the law, and dreading his appearance among them, endeavored by all means to stop his disembarcation; but when he persevered and effected a landing, under the bayonets of the soldiers, he was met by a refusal to swear him into office: on this, he returned to England; but was immediately sent back, a new governor having been in the mean time appointed; and he was at last sworn in; but not till the executive was intirely in the hands of the colonial committee, and an extensive conspiracy formed

for casting off the British yoke, under pretence of putting down slave insurrection. Lord Stanley then obtained the colonial seals, and for a whole year the Mauritius did not receive *a single despatch*: he left the whole supreme court subject to a charge of treason, without the slightest investigation; and the administration of justice in the hands of men whose character and conduct had been impugned by the colonial secretary. After a year of such extraordinary negligence, lord Stanley rushed into unpardonable haste; and hearing only interested parties, he exculpated three judges from lord Ripon's charges. Mr. Jeremie, therefore, seeing no chance of justice being done in any inquiry by a tribunal, of which every member was a slave-holder, had excepted to them all, but the governor. The secretary to the colony was indebted to all the parties, whose fitness to be judges he was one appointed to try: the governor had made the inquiry a private one; and had examined witnesses without the privity of Mr. Jeremie; it was not extraordinary then that the accusation against the judges was negatived, and a charge exhibited against the *procureur-general*, for having stated, although he proved it; whilst, in consequence of instructions from lord Stanley, to suspend those who had made charges which they could not substantiate, the governor, sir W. Nicolay, sent home Mr. Jeremie and Mr. Reddie. The next colonial secretary, now chancellor of the exchequer, went a step farther, declaring that the accused judges were free from any stain in respect to these charges; and even all this did not satisfy the present secretary, who had re-appointed a certain gentleman to the office of *procureur-general*, from which lord Goderich had dismissed him as a slave-holder. The consequence of all these proceedings was, that slavery and its trade were re-established in the colony: the free laborer himself became partially a slave; for if he could not find employment within a month he was liable to banishment: even education could not be given without permission of the governor; and the liberty of the press was destroyed: moreover, so blameless and pure had

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

the conduct of Mr. Jeremie been found, that since his return he had been appointed a judge at Ceylon, to which place he was hurried off by government, in order that certain delegates sent from the Mauritius might not have the benefit of his testimony; and they could only secure this, by engaging to pay his expenses for remaining and giving evidence, in case an inquiry should be instituted.'

However this statement may have been exaggerated, one would have thought that there was enough of startling matter in its charges against our government, to induce its members, for their own sake, to grant the committee of inquiry sought for. Instead of this, however, sir George Grey undertook to dilute them, by representing them as charges long abandoned by their original promoters, and the stories concerning dangerous disaffection and armed conspiracies against British dominion, as fictions only calculated to provoke a smile: and though the motion was strenuously supported by Dr. Lushington,² and Mr. Fowell Buxton, a gentleman well versed in the affairs of this colony, there was found neither honor nor courage enough in a whig ministry, and a reformed parliament, to submit such affairs, and their own conduct in them, to investigation: too great a portion of the old leaven remained in the mass; and the motion was negatived by a majority of 229 to 71.

A more lively interest was excited by discussions on the political discontents of Canada; a large portion of whose population, being French in its origin, democratic in its views, and instigated by intemperate demagogues leagued with others in this country, insisted on demands equally inconsistent with monarchical government and British supremacy; though it must be confessed, that the Canadians had long endured many grievances, arising from the dilatory nature of our

² 'After Mr. Jeremie,' said the learned gentleman, 'had been sent to the colony a second time in 1832, certain persons were by his order committed to prison, tried, and convicted; yet within an hour after the conviction, and the report being submitted to the governor, they were discharged: nay, the governor was actually required to bring Mr. Jeremie to trial for a capital offence, in having instituted this prosecution; and he was kept in suspense upwards of three months before this capital indictment against him was abandoned.' For a full account of these transactions, see Annual Register for 1836.

colonial government at home. Mr. Roebuck, a man radical enough in his opinions to have formed one of the democratic leaders in the colony itself, was their defender and apologist in the British parliament; where, on the sixteenth of May, he brought forward a proposition for reforming the Canadian constitution; the principal aim of which was to render both branches of its legislature elective. By the statute 31 Geo. III. cap. 31, a constitution had been given to the province of Quebec, which thenceforward was divided into Upper and Lower Canada: this constitution was in most respects copied from that of England; a governor acting as the king's representative; a legislative council as the house of lords; and a house of assembly as that of our commons. 'His object,' said Mr. Roebuck, 'was to amend the legislative council; which was, in fact, no more like our house of lords than the colonial governor was like the monarch of these realms; for its members, differing from our peers, were possessed of neither wealth nor property, having no tenants, and, consequently, no influence over the people: they were a mere *clique*, holding power for their own particular purposes. Though this constitution had been given in 1791, it was not till 1810 that the Canadians were permitted to manage their own expenditure; and persons had been imprisoned for merely claiming such right of administration for the house of assembly, in order that it might obtain some control over public officers. This demand was refused by the legislative council; as also was a request made by the house of assembly, to allow the civil list of the colony to be, as here, permanent during the king's life. Then the British government itself proposed that the governor, judges, and secretary should be so secured as to salaries and retiring pensions: the salaries of the judges were made permanent by the house of assembly, and the proceeding was approved by lord Aylmer, then governor; but it was resisted by the council, great part of which was composed of public speculators. When sir R. Peel came into office in 1834, he found the Canadians demanding a responsible executive

CHAP.
LXIX.
1836.

council, and that the legislative council should be rendered elective; he found them refusing to vote money until their grievances should be redressed; and he sent out a commission, not merely to inquire, but also to redress: yet the functions of this commission were unfortunately limited by his successors to the business of inquiry; the object of which was merely to gain time, and by delay to obtain all they wanted—money. Indeed, he was given to understand, that a distinct proposition had been made to the house of assembly, who were told, that if they voted the arrears of three years, and agreed to the civil list, those two measures would be accepted by the government, even though the legislative council should resolve to reject them: but sir Francis Head, being sent out to Upper Canada, published his instructions; and the house of assembly, when these were known, resolved not to grant the money required, though they passed a money bill for six months, which was rejected by the legislative council; and at the present moment the government has no money legally at its disposal. What was it then that the government intended to do? to repeal, as had been suggested by an act of the British parliament, the laws which placed public money at the disposal of the Canadian people? If so, the British dominion would last there just so long as it could be maintained by military force, and no longer. The only way to bind the people of Canada permanently to this country, was to redress their manifold grievances, and to alter the constitution of their legislative council. What harm (said the honorable gentleman) could result from this proposition? It was objected to, as being American and republican. How puerile the argument! By what magic was an aristocracy, the growth of ages, to be formed in a day? That of England had existed ever since she was a nation; yet its influence was daily diminishing, while the feeling of equality was gaining ground: and if such were the case here, how could we expect to maintain an aristocracy in a new nation? But the existence of two parties in Canada, was made an argument for preserving

the legislative council; which was said to represent the English party, as the French party was represented by the house of assembly; and which would become too predominant by the change proposed: but the number of persons speaking the English language in Lower Canada was about 134,000; while those speaking French amounted to 374,932; so that the English party was only about one-third of the French. Also the house of assembly contained eighty-eight members, sixty-four of whom were said to be of French origin; so that the English party bore a similar proportion to the representation: but then it was said, that all those English members did not vote with the government; undoubtedly not: and the same complaint was made in Upper Canada, where no French settlers existed; proving that the present demands proceeded from no narrow party considerations, but were founded on principle and justice: if, therefore, the British government attempted to continue the present kind of rule over Canada, its people would be driven to compare their condition with that of another nation closer to them; and thus a rapid and violent dissolution of the union would become inevitable. Another objection had been made to his proposition,—that if it were carried, the Canadian legislature would immediately seize on all the waste lands: but let it be remembered, that these lands were not the property of England, but of the Canadian people; and that, when once placed under their control, they would cease to be given away in jobs; and being improved, would be made productive for the country.'

No impartial person can deny that there was a considerable degree of justice in these remarks of Mr. Roebuck; however he may differ from that gentleman's opinion regarding the remedy to be applied. Ministers opposed the motion chiefly on the ground, that it was premature to entertain it, before the commissioners had reported the result of inquiries then going on. They denied that any evidence existed of so general a wish for change among the Canadians as would justify them in proposing it: but when alas! was

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

a change ever proposed to a British ministry, at a time which it considered mature, and with a wish which it consented to accept as a general one? No prudent person would recommend precipitate counsels: but it is not wise or humane always to wait until the bayonet must decide a controversy, and arguments proceed out of the cannon's mouth. In the present instance it certainly was expedient to wait until the necessity of so vital a change, as that required, was fully proved; and Mr. Roebuck was advised that he should trust to the promises of redress which were held out, and withdraw his motion: this he did; but with so bad a grace, that it justly provoked sir Robert Peel to remark, that the grounds on which his motion was withdrawn, were calculated to excite expectations in Canada; which, if not realised, would leave this question in a worse position than before.

In our foreign relations, the points which principally occupied parliamentary attention were those connected with the interference of Great Britain in the civil war now raging in Spain. The policy of this interference was described by Mr. Maclean, one of the members for Oxford, as unintelligible in itself, and inconsistent with any precedents; seemingly adopted, not to finish the contest, but to keep it alive; though it was manifest that all interference against Don Carlos, which did not put him down, would turn, in the event of his success, to the prejudice of this country: and he particularly called attention to the treaties made on this subject, and to the high contracting parties. Lord Palmerston vindicated the interference of Great Britain; which had consisted, first, in executing the quadruple treaty; secondly, in the order of council which, by suspending the foreign enlistment act, had enabled the British Legion to be formed, that was now serving in Spain: he illustrated this interference by numerous examples; pointed out our interests in the welfare of Spain under a constitutional government; and expressed his strong confidence in the queen's cause, founded as it was on the general principles of human nature, as well as the feelings of the

Spanish people. Sir Robert Peel thought that the somewhat vague principles by which our interference in the Spanish contest was now defended, went farther than any which had hitherto been propounded; and were not a little dangerous to the peace, independence, and freedom of other nations; making it clear that any government had a right to interfere in the domestic concerns of its neighbors. Sir J. C. Hobhouse, however, denied, that the promotion of the general principles of liberty, or the protection and advancement of our commercial interests, were vague or undefined principles; and insisted that ministers had done nothing but act up to the spirit of treaties by which this country was bound; and of which parliament had never disapproved. In the course of discussion both parties united in expressing their detestation of those cruelties by which the progress of this war was distinguished, among the partisans both of the queen and of Don Carlos: the following authenticated case is given as a specimen. A ferocious Carlist chief, named Cabrera, had been guilty of numerous excesses; but as he could not be taken, Mina, a general in the queen's service, ordered the aged mother of Cabrera to be seized and shot, as an example, according to instructions from the governor-general of the province: Cabrera instantly resorted to retaliation, and put to death in the first instance four ladies, the wives of Spanish officers; moreover threatening, that he would order every person on the queen's side, taken in arms, to be shot: in reply, Noguerras, her majesty's commander, notified that for every individual so sacrificed he would murder five innocent victims; to which the other monster Cabrera responded by a declaration that he would execute 20 of the opposite faction. Such is civil war—more especially in Spain: and for what a length of time did European nations make a false estimate of the Spanish character, early and constantly as it developed itself against the Jews and Moors in Spain, and the Aborigines of South America! nothing could have broken

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

the spell, except that display of it which has been made within the last thirty years.

The little republic too of Cracow, the only spot in Poland which retained a shadow of independence, had been occupied, in the beginning of this year, by a body of Russian, Austrian, and Prussian soldiers; in consequence of a remonstrance to an order sent by those three powers to its senate, for expelling all Polish refugees from its territory; many of whom had been long settled there in marriage, and had conducted themselves as peaceable citizens. Sir Stratford Canning brought this violation of the treaty of Vienna before the house on the eighteenth of March, in a very able speech, explaining the relations in which the republic stood to her three protectors, so called, as well as to the rest of Europe; and skilfully exposing the designs of those protectors against its independence. In conclusion he observed that it was impossible to resist a disposition to inquire whether there were none of our own countrymen among the victims to be sent off to America,—whether there were not among the number those who had claims, not merely on our feeling, but on our sense of duty and justice? Moreover there was reason to believe, that a secret engagement had been entered into by these three great powers, as far back as 1833, for the military occupation of this territory: thus the arrangement seemed to have been of long standing; yet no communication whatever had been made to any foreign government.

Lord Palmerston found himself (as was naturally to be expected) embarrassed in consequence of neither the fact of this military occupation of Cracow, nor its causes, having been communicated to him officially by the three powers;³ all his information being derived from our ministers abroad, and the notices which had appeared in the different journals of Europe: he con-

³ Of course the housebreaker does not willingly alarm the inmates of the devoted mansion; nor does the plunderer of a sheep-fold, of his own accord rouse the sleeping watch-dogs.

fessed that this harsh and unjust measure was a violation of the treaty of Vienna; though he concluded with a sympathizing feeling, and courtly adulation toward these imperial and royal despots; with which the vehement and indignant denunciations of Mr. O'Connell, who most unceremoniously, but justly, denominated them as 'land pirates,' and 'crowned robbers,' who, in violating the neutrality and independence of Cracow, had treated England and France with contumely, formed a curious contrast. Lord John Russell's veneration for crowned heads led him also to think that high language on such an occasion was an unwise thing;⁴ and he could not argue that it would be proper to come to any strong resolutions on the question, even when they knew more about it than they did now; unless indeed we were prepared to support it by means of force; more especially as the honor of Great Britain was not committed in the transaction. This last expression called up lord Dudley Stuart, the noble defender of outraged Poland and the protector of her banished sons, to protest that the honor of Great Britain *had been* violated. 'Was it no affront for these three powers to tell a great country like this, that the treaty which settled the condition of all European nations, and to which we were a party, should be violated and infringed at their pleasure? Was it no attack on our honor, or a thing which we ought not to resent, to be told that this treaty had been torn to pieces, and trodden under foot, by arrogant northern courts? Such a violation of the neutrality of Cracow had inflicted a serious blow on our national reputation, and on the security of every country in Europe.' Thus ended our national dirge over the last act, but one, in the bloody tragedy of Poland. Its oppressors had abided their time; nor did they strike the blow until they knew that England and France were too much occupied with their own domestic concerns to

⁴ High language in a British house of commons, an unwise thing *on such an occasion!* and this from a member of the house of Russell! Why, where else are perfidious despots to hear the voice of truth? Since this time, however, the Russian autocrat has been designated in that assembly, amid the loud acclamations of free men, by a style still less palatable to his lordship's taste.

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

interfere with their designs. They well knew also what a damper even to the expression of generous feelings is a national debt of eight hundred millions; and as to France, they knew that never since the days of Napoleon had she possessed, nor was she likely to possess, a government capable of forming a single great idea; much less a generous one: they saw that she had already commenced her petty vexatious intrigues in every court or territory upon earth, into which one of her envoys could creep; fomenting on all sides little plots, and fancying that she could set the world on fire with a box of lucifer matches.⁵

On the nineteenth of February a lengthened discussion took place regarding the dangers to which Europe itself was exposed from the growing power and systematic encroachments of Russia; more particularly as appeared in the late treaty of Unkiar Skelessi; which augured a dismemberment of the Turkish empire. The subject created considerable interest at the time; but that interest has gradually subsided, together with the danger; a danger which is ready to vanish even before a friendly coalition between France and England—and how much sooner before the gigantic march of the iron and steam powers!

Many of our warm-hearted members, and among them several who entertained the most liberal and even radical opinions, anxiously endeavored to obtain from the commons an address to his majesty, to use his good offices with the king of the French for the liberation of the ex-ministers of Charles X.; imprisoned in the fortress of Ham: but the house, whilst it did justice to the motives in which this proposition originated, and agreed that such a measure would be most becoming to France, opposed itself to the address, as an unjustifiable interference in the domestic affairs of another country, which might even

⁵ Would it were otherwise! for let me not be considered as disposed to condemn the power and spirit of France; or as not desiring to see as close an alliance as possible between her and this country, to the glory of them both, and to the advantage of the world. I only feel indignation at the mean policy and petty jealousies of her monarchs and statesmen, which are the greatest obstacle to such an union.

tend to prevent the good which it desired to accomplish.

A long discussion also took place on the affairs of Greece; whose revenue had not yet equalled its expenditure; and whose government therefore was anxious to obtain a third instalment of the loan guaranteed by the three powers; and which Russia, doubtless for political reasons of her own, was not willing to advance. Lord Palmerston therefore moved for a bill to enable England and France to act separately from Russia on this point; and even for England to advance her own *quota*, without the concurrence of the other two powers; the passing of which bill was one of the last measures of this busy session, which the king closed in person on the thirtieth of August.

In his speech on the above occasion, his majesty alluded to the existing tranquillity, and decrease of crime in Ireland; but in fact this portion of our empire had seldom been in a more turbulent state; for its agitators were again at work, forming societies and combinations, and exciting the angry passions of all classes; among whom the question of municipal reform was thrown as an additional stimulus. The condition of the clergy, this year, regarding their tithes, had considerably improved: for at the end of 1835, a lay association had been formed, for the purpose of enabling them to enforce their rights by such means as the law afforded; and thus a legal process of the court of exchequer was put in motion, far more effective than that open force which had hitherto been their only, and sometimes unhappy resource, on account of the great obstacles opposed to the serving a process on defaulters. The wrath, to which the leaders of the popish party were excited by any apparent possibility of enforcing payment of tithe, was aggravated by the refusal of the lords to create, by passing the Irish municipal bill, a mass of papistical corporations; which would soon have become powerful instruments in the hands of agitators to destroy the protestant establishment: hence the celebrated letter of Mr. O'Connell 'To the People of England;' the object of which was

CHAP.
LXIX.
1836.

CHAP.
LXIX.
1836.

to rouse them to show gratitude to Ireland, for the aid she had lent them in carrying the reform act, by destroying the character and rights of the house of peers. This epistle, however, produced an effect contrary to the expectations of its writer; who was driven back on his own resources of agitation in Ireland; where with the assistance of his friend Mr. Shiel and the popish priests, he organised the 'General National Association,' on the model, and with all the machinery, of its catholic predecessor; including a general subscription, to be called the 'justice-rent.' This association was to meet once a week in the Corn Exchange; its declared objects being the abolition of tithes, (such abolition to be accepted by instalments) and the carrying out of the act for reform in Irish municipal corporations. A project also announced by ministers regarding the introduction of poor-laws into Ireland occupied much attention in this new association; where a popular measure, introduced by father O'Malley for transferring tithes from the clergy, to commissioners appointed for the relief of the poor, was strongly opposed by Mr. O'Connell, who could bear no rival near the throne.

Thus stood affairs in our sister kingdom; nor did those of our most important colony in the west exhibit a more cheerful aspect. In Lower Canada, the disputes between the executive and one branch of the legislature still continued, and threatened to extend themselves to the upper province; when sir F. Head, its new governor, arrived at Toronto on the twenty-third of January, and opened the session of the colonial parliament on the twenty-seventh. He then declared, that the principle of his policy would be to listen to, and redress, every real and practical grievance, while he avoided every attempt at conciliating particular parties; that he had no promises or professions to make, but trusted that he should not call on them in vain for the assistance which government expected, and the country's interests required. On the thirtieth, he communicated to the house his public instructions; in which it was declared, that an elective legislative council

would not be granted; and that what were called the crown reserves would not be abandoned, except an adequate and permanent civil list were voted. These however, and especially the first, were the very points insisted on by the reformers in both provinces; who in both formed a majority of each house of assembly: instead therefore of proceeding to substantial business, that house, on the fifth, presented an address, earnestly calling for a multitude of papers and explanations, regarding past matters or individual transactions; and instead of responding kindly to an appeal made by the governor 'to their liberality and good sense,'—whether, as he had come a perfect stranger to their political differences, with instructions to correct all real grievances, while he maintained the constitution inviolate, it would not be better that he and they should look steadily forward to the future improvement and prosperity of the province, rather than occupy themselves with past transactions—the house of assembly expressed a dissenting opinion, and returned to their primary sources of agitation; when a new source of confusion was soon added to the old. In the Canadas the governor is assisted by an executive council, sworn to give him their best advice in matters that may come before them; and as one of the complaints of the reformers was, that the members of their party were excluded from such council, sir Francis, though he had declared his resolution of attempting to conciliate no party, attempted to conciliate this by the appointment of three new popular members. In consequence, within three weeks there was a schism between the governor and his council; which latter made very extraordinary demands, rejected all his explanations, and after his refusal to permit them to appeal, and make themselves responsible to, the people, tendered their resignation; which was accepted, and a new council nominated.

The whole body of reformers was immediately in commotion: violent addresses were voted to the governor; and on the fourteenth of March the house of assembly, which contained a majority of reformers,

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

took up the matter, by voting an address to his excellency; which led to much angry feeling, to a stoppage of supplies, and to a prorogation on the twentieth of April: on the twenty-eighth of May the legislature was dissolved by proclamation, and a new election ordered; the writs to be returnable on the sixteenth of July. Sir Francis, as it appeared, did not take this step without knowing his ground; for he was clearly right regarding the powers claimed by the council; and the violence of the house of assembly produced a reaction in the province; which, added to the evils caused to the public service through the prorogation, sent a large majority of the new parliament wholly opposed to the designs of the reformers, and thus restored harmony between the governor and the legislature.

Matters, however, did not by any means proceed so favorably in Lower Canada; where the demands of the radical party were still more extravagant, and had continued much longer to be the subject of open and violent discord. We have already seen what were their principal claims—viz., a complete change in the constitution, and an absolute control over all revenues arising within the state: in this latter they went so far as to require, that the charter of a British company, by which a large grant of land for the purposes of settlement had been obtained from the crown, for a valuable consideration, should immediately be annulled; and by way of enforcing their claims, they had refused to vote a civil list; leaving all public servants, even the judges, unpaid; while the party by whom they were supported, chiefly radicals of French origin, began to speak boldly of using force, and threatened a separation from the mother country.

When lord Gosford arrived in the colony, last year, he immediately excited suspicions and fears in the British party, by the close connexion in which he seemed to place himself with the French radicals, and the manner in which he allowed himself to speak of their demands for reform; his great object being to obtain the necessary votes for his civil list, includ-

ing arrears and repayment of money advanced by government. In his speech, at the opening of the session, he had told the house, that if they discharged the arrears due to public officers, and provided for their maintenance, no part of the surplus revenues of the crown would be touched, till the commission had brought its labors to an end: but the ruling party had as yet obtained only general and flattering assurances; and though they believed that his lordship had power, if not at once to concede the desired changes, yet to treat them as fair objects of inquiry, they had not been expressly told so: they therefore spent the session in passing bills relating to local matters, in providing for the payment of their own daily wages, and the salary of their parliamentary agent in London; but nothing could induce them to take up the subject of the civil list, which they put off to the very close of the session, when it would be better seen what they had to expect.

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

Under such circumstances, sir F. Head in Upper Canada, published his instructions; to which there was an appendix, containing extracts from those of lord Gosford; all proving that government had not determined to grant the principal demands of the French party, particularly that relating to their reform of the legislative council; which his majesty was most unwilling should be made an open subject of debate. Hence their wrath was vehemently excited; they complained of studied insult; and voted an address to the king, on the twenty-sixth of February, in which they not only reiterated all their demands, but denied the power of our colonial office to limit the subjects that were to engage their attention; appealing from such infringement of the people's liberties to the supreme authority of the empire, and to his majesty sitting in his high court of parliament.

The crisis having thus arrived, lord Gosford, notwithstanding all his attempts at conciliation, was under the necessity of proroguing the legislature early in March; when he told its members, that, as they had refused to make provision for past years, or future expenditure, he would apply to these purposes, as well

CHAP.
LXIX.

1836.

as to the current expenses of government, those revenues which were at the disposal of the crown: this their own obstinacy rendered imperative on him; and as all offers of peace and conciliation of which he was the bearer had been rejected, he would not venture to predict the consequences of this rejection, and of the demands which had been sent to his majesty.

In September, time having been taken to communicate with our colonial government, the legislature was again assembled; principally to give its members an opportunity of passing the necessary money votes, and receiving the answer of the British government to their late address. On the important subject of the legislative council, our colonial secretary acknowledged his own instructions to the governor, that his majesty was unwilling to admit the elective principle as matter of debate; but he added, that the commissioners had likewise been instructed to inquire how far the legislative council had really answered the purposes of its institution, and of what amendments it might be susceptible; also that government, when their report was received, would consider whether any alteration, 'founded on the principle, and conceived in the act, of 1791, would render the operation of that act more conformable to the intention of its framers; its principle being, as he conceived, that there should be two distinct and independent houses of legislature. Adhering to this it would remain with the commissioners to inquire, how the most effectual means could be taken for securing such a legislative council, as might at once enjoy a due share of public confidence; and the full exercise of an enlightened independent judgment on all matters submitted to its consideration.'

All however was of no avail: the assembly voted an address to an answer to the message communicating this dispatch; in which they repeated their former demands, reproaches, and complaints; adding to them, the use of the government revenues made by the executive since the termination of the former session; and declaring their renewed resolution to grant no farther supplies: nay, they had proceeded

to a certain length with a bill of their own, for making the legislative council elective, when the session was closed by his excellency on the fourth of October. At this time Jamaica also was the scene of similar disputes between its executive and legislature; although here they regarded particular legislative measures, rather than any proposed alterations in the existing constitution. Our colonial government decided in this case, that lord Sligo had unequivocally committed a breach of privilege; and he was either recalled, or permitted to resign. In fact he ought never to have been sent to so important a post.

France this year settled her disputes with the United States; but was unable to effect the conversion of her five per cent. stock: hence the resignation of her cabinet, and the formation of a new one, under that firebrand of ministers M. Thiers. The trial and execution of Fieschi and his accomplices, for the attempted murder of the king, took place; but did not prevent other attempts, the same year, from being made against what appeared to be a charmed life. A wise and important resolution was taken by the French government to abolish licensed gaming houses, those fruitful sources of demoralisation and misery; but nothing could induce the chambers to relax that system of commercial legislation, to which they continue so devotedly attached, and which fetters commerce by protective duties, almost amounting to prohibitions.

Spain was still drenched with the blood of her sons; and atrocities, such as no where else are heard of, continued to be committed: several of these have already been alluded to; the rest would require a volume for their recital. This year, however, great disturbances took place at Madrid; when the queen regent was compelled by force to proclaim the constitution of 1812.

In Portugal, the year opened with the second marriage of the young queen. She had become a widow in March preceding; and the Cortes lost no time in presenting an address, praying her majesty, for the

CHAP.
LXIX.
1836.

good of the nation, to select a second husband; and before the end of the year a marriage treaty had been arranged with prince Ferdinand Augustus, of Saxe Coburg, another scion of a family marvellously successful in rising by matrimonial alliances. The finances of the nation continued in a most disordered state: riots occurred at Oporto; and a military insurrection at Lisbon; when this queen also was compelled to proclaim the democratic constitution of 1820; under which the commercial treaty which had so long existed between Portugal and Great Britain was allowed to terminate; and scandalous treatment of the British Auxiliary troops took place; who were ejected from the country without receiving one farthing of arrears due to them for past services.

The points still in dispute between Holland and Belgium, chiefly regarded the union of Luxemburg with the latter country; and continued nearly in the same state as last year. In Holland the States-general were occupied with the amelioration of their criminal code, and the ordinary matters of finance, which were found prosperous enough to allow of some taxes to be reduced. In Belgium the principal occurrence of the year was the passing of an act to establish a municipal form of government in its towns and communes; the provisional government, called into existence by the late revolution, having made these local governments purely democratic and independent. The Germanic diet still watched vigilantly over the proceedings of hot-brained demagogues, who, under the affected title of 'Young Germany,' had become disseminators of the vilest principles in politics, morals, and religion: on the eighteenth of August resolutions were adopted, to prevent such offenders in one state from finding an asylum in another. In the present year also, the grand object after which Prussia had so long been laboring—to unite the German states in one body, by a commercial treaty, which should introduce into all the same scale of duties,—was accomplished; when the Zollverein received the adhesion of Nassau and the free city of

Frankfort. Before this singularly wise and politic scheme was effected, every sovereign in Germany was accustomed to protect his territory against a neighbor, as if he had been an enemy; surrounding it by a cordon of custom-houses in lieu of fortresses. The other European affairs, which deserve notice, have been already touched on.

In North America, after the United States had settled their disputes with France, a large surplus remained in the treasury; and its disposal occasioned a strong party contest in congress. It was applicable to no specific purpose, and lay deposited by the secretary of the treasury, in different state banks; general Jackson having succeeded in destroying the United States Bank, as a bank of the union, government wished to apply it to military purposes: but the opposition carried a motion for distributing among the state governments in proportion as each had contributed towards it. The ostensible reason of general Jackson's hostility to the United States Bank, was a wish to secure a currency in specie, and check the diffusion of mere paper credit: for the same purpose, several of the states had prohibited the circulation of small notes; and congress now prohibited such from being taken in payment on any public account. But instead of the wished for results being obtained, banking, and paper credit, and all the wild speculations which for a time attach themselves to it, increased to an extent which America had never known; and threatened consequences which very few European countries had ever felt: in truth, the womb of Time was big with events, which no one would have dared to predict. General Jackson's longest constitutional term of service having expired, the ministerial and successful candidate for his chair was the vice-president, Mr. Martin Van Buren.

In Mexico, Texas, the most northerly and fertile of its provinces, stretching along the shore of the Gulf, and extending to the confines of the territory of New Orleans, established its independence, after Santa Anna and the forces of the republic had been defeated

CHAP.
LXIX.
1836.

with great slaughter. At the end of 1835 its inhabitants had raised the standard of revolt, under the pretence of defending their rights and liberties, and the republican principles of the federal constitutions of 1824: but the real instigators of the rebellion were persons belonging to the United States; and the true object was, the incorporation of this rich country as a member of the American union. The population of Texas contained many North American emigrants: its landholders were universally slave-holders: the Mexican government had abolished the slave-trade, and the Texians complained of unjust oppression, which drew to their side all the southern and slave-holding states, eager for the accession of a new and extensive territory of this kind to the union, in order to increase their influence in congress.

In the other provinces of South America *insurrection* was the order of the day; but their petty strifes are scarcely worthy of particular record.

No occurrences took place worthy of notice in our domestic affairs, if we except the death of that eminent judge, lord Stowell, who had retired in 1828 from the court of admiralty, over which he had long presided with much honor to himself and advantage to his country; whilst his aged brother, lord Eldon, still survived, to feel his apprehensions gradually diminish regarding that act of reform, the prospect of which had been to him a source of long and excruciating anxiety.

Their majesties spent the early part of the year at Brighton, receiving many of their subjects with the rights of royal hospitality: the king was observed to be attentive to his health, though very sedulous in the discharge of his public duties. At a magnificent *fête* held in London, on account of the queen's birthday, the young princess Victoria paid a visit of congratulation to her majesty, in high health and spirits; being much admired for the elegance and simplicity of her manners.

Parties, at the commencement of 1837, remained much in the same state as in the preceding year; and

the uses made of the reform bill, as well as the checks which the upper house was able to give to its impetuous movements, began to quiet the apprehensions of those who looked forward to revolution as its result: the lapse of two sessions was sufficient to cool the ardor of hope, as well as calm the agony of despair. This result was accelerated by the conduct of the radical party, who had enabled ministers to carry their favorite measure; and whose success prompted them to overrate the hold which they had on the opinions of the country at large, and to take up a high position as advocates of change; and by this they deprived the whigs of a large portion of that popularity which they had so hardly earned: nor did the avowal of their hopes and projects, which, in the conviction of their growing strength, the radicals did not hesitate to indulge, fail to alarm many who had supported the late change made in our constitution, only on the understanding that it was to be a final one, and who abhorred the periodical recurrence of popular tumult. We may add to this the natural lassitude which follows a high state of excitement; the disappointment of the masses, who expected that under the reform act the quartern loaf, and the quart of porter, would have fallen to a penny each; and more especially that good sense which lies at the bottom of the English character, and which always comes into action, sooner or later, when it is wanted. Hence we have a sufficient explanation of the different results of the general election which returned the first reform parliament, and of that by which it was replaced, when sir R. Peel took the reins of government in hand. In fact, the influence of property, of old connexions, and of early prejudices was beginning to resume its ancient sway: the new boroughs acted very much like the old ones; and little could thence be inferred as to the increased prevalence of revolutionary opinions in general. In parliament ministers had no reason to complain: they were greatly relieved from that pressure from without, which was always urging extreme measures, and which had driven lord Grey from his post: they had, much to their own

CHAP.
LXIX.
—
1837.

comfort, exchanged a radical for a conservative opposition; and if their opponents were more formidable, their friends were less troublesome. The whigs were content with this state of things; for they are a body of men highly aristocratic in their opinions, and cannot be supposed indifferent to the stability of those institutions, on which their own importance and welfare depends; while the great mass of the nation at this period willingly left them in possession of power; lest, if they resumed their place as an opposition, they might gain that species of popularity which opposition generally holds; when the radicals being at liberty to resume the task of excitement, both might co-operate together with greater effect and bring the vessel of the state into greater dangers. Such was the general state of public opinion regarding our domestic concerns; while the foreign relations of the country appeared as pacific as at any former period of our annals. It was evident that peace had now become the leading principle of European states—and this appeared evident enough from the impotency of revolutions and civil wars in particular states, to draw others into the vortex. Moreover it may be stated as a truism, that the longer peace shall last the longer is its continuance probable: so many and so vast are the connexions formed between different countries, and so anxious are commercial and monied men, the most powerful in all, to draw closer those connexions which guarantee to them the possession of their treasures. Add also to this the negative influence of national debts upon war, and the direct power which may be brought to bear upon it from the wondrous inventions of the age, and peace may now be considered as advancing to her ultimate triumph.

The assembling of parliament had been assigned to the last day of January; but the business of discussion anticipated its operations. Numerous meetings took place in the country, under the auspices of the several parties, to array their strength, and display their views, preparatory to the important struggle about to take place within the walls of St. Stephen's.

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

At the opening of this year the reformers of Bath gave a dinner to their representative Mr. Roebuck, which included the leading radicals of the country, who took this opportunity to renew a public profession of their political faith; declaring their unconquerable hatred of tory principles; explaining their reasons for giving assistance to a whig government, which was yet unwilling to advocate truly liberal projects; and endeavoring to restore confidence to the more timid reformers, who desponded at the view of conservative forces, by reminding them of what they had been able to achieve under circumstances far more unfavorable; when the aristocracy dictated to the intire legislature.

A meeting, still more imposing in numbers and circumstances, was a banquet given by the reformers of Middlesex, to their representatives Mr. Byng and Mr. Hume, in Drury-lane theatre; where tables for 1100 persons were laid out on the stage and a raised floor in the pit; the boxes being appropriated to spectators of the scene. Here Mr. Byng, the father of the whig party in the house, congratulated this assembly on the progress and diffusion of liberal principles which he had lived to see. Mr. Hume dwelt on the impolicy of leaving the army in the hands of their opponents. Mr. Grote required, that every member or supporter of government should be allowed to give his free suffrage on the question of the ballot: but all these gentlemen, together with Messrs. Warburton and Duncombe, deprecated as the consummation of calamity to the popular cause, a return of the tories to power; a party whose dominion rests on every thing that is antiquated, corrupt, and anti-popular; on oligarchical predominance in the state, and sectarian pride and privileges in the church. Similar meetings were got up in other parts of the country, where similar sentiments were displayed; nevertheless it is true, that a reaction in favor of conservative principles had begun throughout the realm; the stream was turning; and strong indications of this change appeared at a very important meeting held in Glasgow, to honor sir R. Peel's election to the office of lord rector of its univer-

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

sity, where sir John Campbell, the attorney-general, had been defeated. An immense number of his political friends and admirers met the right honorable baronet on this occasion, in an immense temporary saloon, where tables were laid out for nearly 3500 guests: among them were many who had supported the reform bill; a circumstance which was adverted to by sir Robert himself, as a matter of great satisfaction, when he addressed the assembly after dinner. 'I want not,' said he, 'to taunt you with reaction or conversion; but I say, that if you adhere to the principles which you professed in 1830, it is here you ought to come. You consented to a reform, invited by a speech from the throne, expressly on the condition, that it should be according to the acknowledged principles of the constitution. Let us have no mistake on that point: I see the necessity of widening the foundations on which the defence of our constitution and religious establishment must rest.' He then asked the reformers present, whether they adhered to the principle on which the bill was brought in; that is, as an instrument for improving and preserving the settled institutions of Great Britain: and he contended that reformers should not leave to him, who was taunted with the appellation of a conformer, the defence of their own measure; but should prove it to be, what they had contended it was, consistent with those principles. He agreed with them that the machine of government should not be allowed to stand still; he wished to see it performing its proper and healthful office; though he would not sanction a constant interference with its vital functions.

'But,' he continued, 'let us come to the main point; for I do not wish to conciliate your confidence by hoisting false colors. My object is to support our national establishments, which connect protestantism with the state, in the three realms.' To this declaration the whole assembly, rising in one mass, responded with long and loud acclamations. 'Then again,' he went on to say, 'I avow to you that I mean to support in its full integrity, the house of lords (here there was a similar outbreak of applause) as an essential, indis-

pensable condition for maintaining the constitution under which we live: and if you assent to this opinion, the hour is arrived, when we must all be prepared to act on the declaration of it.' In conclusion the new rector observed, that he had long fought the battles of the constitution; but he never had despaired; he had never doubted that the ancient hearts of England and Scotland, would rally round the institutions of their common country. With what feelings of confidence then should he return to take his part in the same conflict? The disturbing force of foreign example had diminished; the dazzling illusions of the glorious days had passed away; and the affections of the people were visibly gravitating again to their old centre, full of a respect for property, a love of national freedom, and an attachment to long established institutions. From these walls he trusted a spirit would go forth, to animate the desponding, and encourage the timid. He looked abroad from the spot on which he then stood, to the moral influence of that opinion which constituted the chief defence of nations; he looked to it for the maintenance of that system of government which protected the rich from spoliation, and the poor from oppression; he looked to that spirit which would range itself under no tawdry banner of revolution; but would unfurl and rally round the flag which had braved 'a thousand years the battle and the breeze.' Yes; he felt not a doubt that it would continue to float triumphantly; and that our constitution, tried as it had been in the storms of adversity, would come forth purified and fortified in the rooted convictions, feelings, and affections of a religious, moral, and patriotic people.' The manner in which these and other such remarks were received, tended to exhibit the sons of Caledonia firm as their rocks and mountains in the cause of the best constitution that has ever yet been devised for social happiness; and similar sentiments were now regaining strength throughout the empire.

Parliament met on the last day of January; the session being opened by commission. After the usual statements concerning our pacific relations with foreign

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

powers, his majesty, by commissioners, lamented the state of civil war still existing in Spain; and alluded to the threatening aspect which affairs in Portugal had at one time taken; and which had induced him to order an augmentation of our naval force in the Tagus to protect the persons and property of British subjects.

He then called attention to the very important subject of the state of Canada, reports of which he had ordered to be laid before parliament. He also recommended to their serious deliberations the provisions which would be submitted to them for the improvement of the law and administration of justice; also such measures as might impart increased stability to our established church while they produced concord and good will.

He recommended more especially to the house of commons a renewal of their inquiries into the operation of the act for joint-stock banks; concluding with a reference to the state of Ireland, and to the wisdom of adopting all such measures as might improve that part of the united kingdom. With this view his majesty recommended to the early notice of parliament, the present constitution of the municipal corporations of that country; the collection of tithes; and the difficult, but pressing question, of establishing some legal provision for the poor, guarded by prudent regulations, and such precautions against abuse, as experience might suggest.

The address in the lords, moved by the earl of Fingall, was seconded by lord Suffield; and both mover and seconder were careful not to go beyond the royal speech itself in topics or opinions; to which, the usual vagueness was communicated. The duke of Wellington admitted, that an address less liable to objection could hardly have been composed; but he protested strongly against the reasoning of the noble seconder, who seemed to think, that the existence and conduct of the Irish National Association was justified by the proceedings of that house. He did not call on government to interfere with the proceedings of such an association; but while he saw a body existing

which formed committees, named agents, raised money, and appointed officers, he could hardly reconcile this with the tranquillity which had been talked of: and he asked, whether it was another evidence of such tranquillity, that church property was all but annihilated; and that a clergyman could scarcely claim his dues without the certainty of being murdered.

His grace then alluded to the affairs of Spain; and to the quadruple treaty, of which he had never approved; though when in office he had considered it a duty to carry out its provisions. He thought that there should have been no interference in the internal affairs of Spain; and the notion of forcing any system of government on that country was wholly impracticable: to do so we must take both our own and the Spanish army into our pay; and this, he suspected, would not be very palatable to a house of commons, or a chamber of deputies. He deprecated any such attempt as injurious to Spain itself, where three several parties had already been ruined by our intervention.

In the commons the address, moved by Mr. Sandford, was seconded by Mr. Stuart Villiers; and the debate which followed was enlivened by Mr. Roebuck, who took occasion to inveigh strongly against the whole system of ministerial policy; but he met with little encouragement from the house, whose members in general differed with him in thinking the whigs worse than the tories, as well as in the necessity of the ballot and other organic changes.

Ireland continued to be this year, as it had been for many years, the cardinal point of our domestic politics: indeed, of late our parliamentary annals have been little more than attempts at ministering to her ailments, which result from the misgovernment of centuries; and the release of our legislature from a constantly recurring discussion of Irish questions, would not be the least among the benefits attending any system which would permanently set them at rest. At this moment Irish politics had acquired more importance than ever; and it was by dint of political agitation that Mr. O'Connell was enabled to

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

secure the return of that body of members, denominated 'the tail,' whose support was now the mainstay of ministers. A question affecting the Irish church was the means by which the whigs returned to power; and farther concession to the same party was naturally assumed to be the condition of their retaining it. Under these circumstances every effort was made to alarm and exasperate the protestant mind throughout the United Kingdom by pictures of the ruthless conduct of Romanists, especially of the catholic association, and the prospective ruin of our church establishment. Hence a great protestant demonstration was made this year, just before the assembling of parliament, at the Mansion House in Dublin; where it was calculated that 3500 persons were present, including about thirty noblemen, with a large body of landed proprietors and other influential persons. The sentiments of this assembly, as well as their apprehensions, were embodied in a petition to the house of lords, which was presented on the twenty-eighth of April by the marquis of Downshire; when it led to an able and interesting debate on the state of Ireland.

But on whichever side the grievances of that country preponderated, ministers lost no time in bringing its politics under the notice of parliament. On the seventh of February lord John Russell moved for leave to bring in a bill to amend the Irish municipal corporations; which differed from that of last year only on one material point—the power given to town councils of interfering in the appointment of sheriffs. Among the new topics introduced into the debates were a strong eulogy, by lord John Russell, on Mr. Fox's principle of governing Ireland, by concessions; and by pleasing the people; together with a labored defence of lord Mulgrave, who had fully and successfully administered his government on that principle. 'He has endeavored,' said his lordship, 'to carry into all legal and official details the spirit of impartial justice; in which he had been ably assisted by his chief secretary, his attorney and solicitor-general, each acting in complete accordance

with himself: nor did he fail to notice lord Mulgrave's impartial selection of persons for government officers, and stipendiary magistrates: with regard to the National Association, he contended that it was a mere result of the political state of the country; and asked, what concessions had ever been made to Ireland that did not seem at least the effect of fear?

His lordship was answered on these points at great length and with great ability by Mr. serjeant Jackson; who reiterated all the assertions of the Dublin meeting against the earl of Mulgrave; and especially reprobated the conduct of the late attorney-general, in giving orders that no jurymen should be set aside; by which means it was impossible to obtain verdicts against men whose guilt was notorious. He strongly inculcated the recent appointment of Mr. Pigot, a Roman catholic, to the important office of legal adviser to the Irish executive; who though a gentleman of high legal talent and private respectability, was one of the most active members of that general association, which was nothing else than the old catholic association revived; revived too when the Orange societies had set so laudable an example of dissolution. He also strongly censured the viceroy's autumnal circuit of gaol delivery, in quest of popularity; when he set open the prison doors, and discharged prisoners, according to the extent of the county or the number of its inhabitants; and this, without any consultation with the judges, or reference to the circumstances of the case. Was this the way, he justly and indignantly asked, to insure confidence in the administration of the law? But when the learned serjeant inveighed with equal indignation against an invitation which Mr. O'Connell had received to dine with the lord lieutenant, he weakened the force, and tarnished the brilliancy, of his arguments, by imbuing them so strongly with party spirit: the charge had very little effect on the house; and indeed it would have been singular, if lord Mulgrave, who, as well as the rest of the administration owed so much to Mr. O'Connell's support, had not thought him worth the civility of an invitation to

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

dinner. This attack drew down upon the learned serjeant no small share of abuse from the great agitator; who was followed by Mr. Shaw, whose invective called up Mr. Roebuck to lecture the house on the countenance which it seemed to be giving to this reciprocation of invective.

On the second night of the debate, Messrs. Lefroy and West, with much force and ability, recapitulated the arguments used against the Irish government and its ally Mr. O'Connell; when a case was cited by Mr. West, to the effect, that proposals from a most respectable clergyman of the established church in Ireland, for a life insurance, had been refused by the directors of a company.

A detailed vindication of the noble viceroy's administration from so many allegations, was undertaken by lord Morpeth. Sir James Graham in reply adverted with much severity to the connexion of government with so dangerous an implement of democracy as the general association. 'One striking peculiarity of Ireland,' said the honorable baronet, 'is; that while the great mass of property belongs to protestants, the great bulk of the population is Roman catholic. Every concession hitherto made has failed; and the past, I fear, is, in this respect, only a pledge for the future. Believing that any increase of the democratic power would be dangerous to protestantism in Ireland, I am prepared to take my stand, and to resist, not only the abolition of exclusively protestant corporations, but the erection of new ones, intended to be no more nor less than so many catholic fortresses to assist in a warfare against the protestant establishment.'

In reply, sir J. C. Hobhouse referred to, and repeated lord John Russell's intimation, that the fate of this measure would decide that of the cabinet; and he then asked, of the powerful party opposite, if they should succeed in obtaining office, on what principle they expected to govern Ireland? By Orange neckerchiefs and Orange acclamations? or by a majority in the lords against a majority in the house of commons?

a house assembled under sir R. Peel's own auspices, and which had already supported this measure by a majority of 86 ?

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

Sir Robert Peel denied the right of any one to catechise him on the results of a contingency which, till that night, he had thought most remote. One-half of sir John's speech had been a doleful lamentation of the inability of ministers to carry on the present government. As for lord John Russell's exposition of its Irish policy, it reminded him of the performance of the play, in which the two characters of Hamlet and Ophelia are admitted: it contained not one word of reference to the two great questions which concern that country; tithes, and poor-laws: but we are told that because we refuse to apply the same principle to Ireland as to England, respecting municipal institutions, we are both wronging and insulting the Irish people. 'Let me then ask (said he) do you intend to apply that rule to the other measures? to the church, and to the poor-laws? I know that many have clamored for identity of legislation, and assailed us with the charge of insult, who have shrunk from it when these interests came into consideration: nor was it any more of an insult to Irishmen to refuse them certain municipal institutions, than it would be to reject a measure for erecting Birmingham and Manchester into corporate towns.'

In his concluding reply lord John Russell said, he had not thought it desirable to mix up the questions of the church and poor-laws, with that of corporation reform. It was certainly his wish to support the church of Ireland; and he greatly deplored the sufferings of its clergy; but the danger imminent over that establishment, came from sir Robert Peel and his friends. He firmly believed, that if the bill of 1834 had been accepted, they would have obtained a better guarantee for its security, than was probably now in their power.

The motion, which was merely one for leave to bring in the bill, was not opposed; consequently the two parties had no opportunity of trying their strength in

CHAP.

LXIX.

1837.

a division, though each successfully enough pointed out the difficulties attaching themselves to the governing principles of its antagonists. Both at this time, and for many years afterwards, the church and its tithes, the want of proper poor-laws, the temper of the inhabitants, the hostility of the priests, the agitation of Mr. O'Connell, and any cause but the true one, has been assigned for the disturbed state of Ireland and the wretched condition of its people, who sow and reap for others what they may not touch themselves; and who are driven by destitution to the commission of outrages which prevent the introduction of that capital among them, which by employing their hands and filling their stomachs, would render them as peaceable as any subjects in her majesty's dominions. It is the *tenure of land* in that unfortunate, confiscated, country, which lies at the root of the evil.

On the twentieth of February, the bill which gave cause to the debates above recited, was introduced into the house of commons by that accomplished and patriotic nobleman lord Francis Egerton; when it created long debates, intermingled with many personalities: among these was a lively and effective sally made by Mr. Sheil against lord Lyndhurst (who happened at the very time to be sitting under the gallery) in return for his unfortunate application of the term *aliens* to the catholic population of Ireland. 'It was an obnoxious expression, which had never been disavowed; and even sir Robert Peel, though he would not adopt, dared not disapprove of it. He was only surprised, that the duke of Wellington, when he heard it, had not started up and said, those aliens had done their duty. The duke,' said Mr. Sheil, 'is not a man of sudden emotions; but he ought not to have forgotten Vimiera and Badajos, Salamanca and Toulouse, or the last glorious conflict which crowned all his former victories. On that day—when the destinies of mankind were trembling in the balance, when batteries spread slaughter over the field, and the legions of France rushed again and again to the conflict,—on that day did the *aliens* flinch? No; on that day the

blood of the men of England, Ireland, and Scotland, was poured out together: they fought in the same field—they died the same death—they were stretched in the same pit—their dust was commingled—the same dew of Heaven fell on the earth which covered them—the same grass sprung from the soil in which they reposed side by side: and is it to be endured, that we should be called *aliens* and strangers to that empire for which our best blood was shed?

CHAP.
LXIX.

—1837.

This appeal, which elicited enthusiastic cheers, called up sir Robert Peel, who deprecated such methods of catching at any hasty phrase, dropped in the heat of debate, and making it a matter of history. He asked, for instance, whether Mr. Sheil had ever heard of an Irishman, who thought so little of his country's glory as to frame no better appellation for the duke of Wellington, than that of 'a stunted corporal?' Sir Robert then went into an argument against the bill under consideration; which finally passed the commons by 302 votes against 247.

On the thirteenth of April, it was introduced into the upper house by lord Melbourne; who moved that the second reading be fixed for the twenty-fifth of the same month; and on the day previous, a meeting of the conservative peers is said to have taken place at Apsley-house, for the purpose of considering the best method of dealing with it. A strong party were for throwing it out at once; but the duke's opinion, that it should be allowed to go into committee, prevailed; and, when asked, what he would do with it when there, he is said to have replied in his own laconic manner,—'it would be time enough to think of that when it was there.'

In moving the second reading of the bill, lord Melbourne expatiated much on the good effects resulting from a similar measure in England; adding many other arguments for inducing the house to concede to Ireland what was but little to give, though much to withhold; and asking, whether we were prepared always to govern that country in a manner hostile to the feelings of its great mass of inhabitants?

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

The duke of Wellington was ready to agree to the second reading of the bill, on an understanding that existing corporations ought not to be continued; but he would not pledge himself to various details of the present measure, against which he felt strong objections: these, however, he would endeavor to remove in committee: but he could not suppress his astonishment that lord Melbourne should have determined to bring again before the house, a measure which it had rejected last session; not anticipating the ready reply which his lordship did not fail to use, when he observed, 'that the case was far from a singular one: for there was a bill against which the noble duke himself always divided; but which he was the very man to introduce and to carry.' Lord Brougham would have hailed the consent of the duke and his ally lord Lyndhurst, to the second reading of this bill, could he have believed it to proceed from any change of opinion, rather than from a wish of unprofitable delay; but on the fifth of May, when the order of the day was read for the house to resolve itself into committee on the bill, his grace rose, and moved to refer its committal to the ninth of June; being anxious to see the result of deliberations in the other house on the pending measures of Irish tithes and poor-law. On a division, there was found a majority of 77 votes in favor of this postponement; which gave Mr. Hume occasion to say in the lower house, which was then in a committee of supply, that there seemed to be no chance of agreement between the two houses; and that as the lords chose to stop all reform, the commons would do well to stop all supplies: accordingly he moved that the chairman do report progress, and ask leave to sit again; when, if this were agreed to, he should propose that the chairman do sit again on the ninth of June. This motion was received with cheers from his own side of the house; but on the chancellor of the exchequer's remonstrance, that the money was really wanted, to discharge the obligations of the state, Mr. Hume consented to withdraw it.

Although the postponement thus carried was for

more than a month, there appeared to be so little probability that either the tithe or poor-law bill would come before the peers by that period, that lord Lyndhurst moved for a further postponement to the third of July; carrying his motion against the immediate consideration of the bill, by a majority of 86 votes.

As the chief malady of Ireland is the destitute and degraded condition of the great mass of its inhabitants, how to deal with a radical evil of such magnitude, was a problem of immense difficulty. One thing, however, seemed clear—that before any thing was attempted affecting the habits of the people, their confidence in the good intentions of the legislature ought to be conciliated, by something offered in the shape of a positive benefit: a provision therefore for the destitute poor seemed necessary, not merely as called for by their actual sufferings, but as a ground for the introduction of other measures of a less palatable character.

The chief objection to this scheme lay in the abuses and embarrassments which had arisen out of a similar system in England: this difficulty, however, was in a great degree removed by the apparent success of changes lately introduced into our poor-laws; and men of almost all parties were now eager in their desire to see the system extended to Ireland, with modifications necessary to adapt it to the peculiar circumstances of that country.

A board of commissioners had been for some time busied with the consideration of this subject at Dublin, and had made a report which was very unfavorably received by government; who next sent Mr. Nicholls, a clever confidential agent, to prosecute inquiries by personal investigation; and this gentleman in six weeks found sufficient facts and grounds for a very able report, which he sent in on the twelfth of November.

Hence it appeared that Ireland, notwithstanding all her sufferings, was decidedly an improving country in respect of production. Evidence of increased wealth appeared every where; especially in the towns: but though capital increased, population increased still

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

faster; and the great mass of the people remained poor. The extreme sub-division of land tended greatly to this result; for the soil, fertile as it is, had become exhausted by incessant cropping; and except in the grazing districts, farms of above one hundred acres had disappeared. There being no legal provision for the destitute, and the sub-division of land having destroyed all regular demand for labor, a piece of ground was the only source of subsistence to the peasantry: hence the violence with which they resist dispossession; since land, on which they can raise a few potatoes, is to them a necessary of life.

Mendicancy, it went on to say, had become universal, and therefore no longer disgraceful; drunkenness from the use of whiskey and tobacco was increasing; self-respect was almost destroyed; and while desultory and idle habits distinguished the men, the heaviest part of life's drudgery devolved on the women.

The chief objection urged against the introduction of a legal system of relief in this country, was its probable charge: it was said, that it would lead to universal pauperism and a consequent confiscation of property: such a difficulty was to be obviated by making actual destitution the sole ground of relief, and providing an adequate test of its reality. At this time no test of destitution existed; for mendicancy was only an outward sign of it—but it was a heavy and unequal charge on the country: the great burthen of relief fell on the poorer classes; the higher generally, and the absentee landlords intirely, escaped from it. The people were aware of this; and were anxious for the introduction of a system of poor-laws, similar to those lately amended by the British legislature.

Such a system, however, it was observed, should not be expected to work miracles: it would not immediately give employment or capital; but it might serve to help the country through a season of change, from the system of small holdings, to that of dependence on daily labor for support; of all changes the most desirable. Moreover a legal provision for the poor, seemed an indispensable preliminary to the suppression of

mendicancy: above all the great requisite was a feeling of security; such as would invite capital and by it give employment; without which no security of person or property can exist.

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

With respect to the particular question of how far an introduction of the English poor-law was practicable in Ireland; two difficulties presented themselves: first, whether the workhouse system could be relied on as a test of destitution; and secondly, whether means and machinery existed for the formation of unions: these questions, and especially the law of settlement, were treated by Mr. Nicholls with great ability; and it was his opinion that emigration should not be looked to as an ordinary resource; the necessity for its adoption being regarded as an indication of disease, which it would be better to prevent, than thus to remove. In conclusion he came to a consideration of the nature and appointment of the 'central authority,' on which the whole administration of the new system was to depend; and he strongly recommended this to be delegated to the English board, so as to preserve a unity of design and management.

On the thirteenth of February lord John Russell brought this important subject before the commons, pressing it on their early attention, and laying before them the very able statement of Mr. Nicholls, whence he drew the principal arguments of his speech on this occasion; when the Irish members, of all parties, generally expressed satisfaction at the proposal; but Mr. O'Connell, though he did not actually oppose it, was much less sanguine than others respecting its beneficial results. The hundred workhouses proposed, he said, would afford shelter and relief to 80,000 persons: but what proportion was this to the mass of destitution in Ireland? He objected also to the *gradual* introduction of the measure, creating a state of transition, during which neither relief nor charity would be afforded to the suffering people; while relief in one district would instantly put in motion the destitution all around it. He disapproved, too, of that part of the plan which confined relief and employment to the

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

unions, feeding men in idleness! He had also recommended to government an extensive plan of emigration, which he could not give up.

Sir Robert Peel was disposed cordially to support this proposal in its general objects; and lord Stanley, himself an Irish landlord, spoke still more strongly in its favor: but the second reading of the bill did not come on till the end of April; and the interval appeared only to have confirmed Mr. O'Connell in his hostility to all its provisions. On that occasion he attacked the measure in an able and forcible speech, though he repeated his intention of not directly opposing it; but he deliberately thought that it would aggravate, rather than mitigate the existing evils of the Irish peasantry. Of those evils he drew a very distressing picture; and then made a strong apostrophe to England as their author; to whose ancient spoliation of his unhappy country many of them, it must be confessed, are attributable. Numerous speakers followed; and every one had his criticism to offer on the details of this measure. Mr. Pryme was one of the few who objected to its principle in the abstract, which merely diverted money perniciously from one channel into another. 'If you levy,' said he, 'a hundred pounds, you take it from the employment of productive labor, and place it to the relief of unemployed poor: the Irish are suffering from want of employment; supply that, and there will be no surplus of labor in the market.'

Both sir Robert Peel and lord John Russell contended in reply, that a poor-law was not a general means for providing employment; though it was a mistaken notion of its proper functions in that respect which led to the chief abuses of the system in England: its object was merely to relieve the absolutely destitute, who might otherwise be left to starve; whilst it gave a right to magistrates to suppress vagrancy and imposture.

On the twelfth of May, when the order of the day was read for the house to go into committee, Mr. Lucas moved, 'that it be an instruction to the committee to introduce a provision for settlement, so as

more closely to apportion the pecuniary charges to be incurred and levied under the name of poor-rates.' But it is scarcely necessary to follow this bill any farther; as in consequence of the demise of the crown it never advanced beyond this stage of its progress.

On the first of May, the house of commons went into committee for considering that part of his majesty's speech which related to Irish tithes; when lord Morpeth observed, that this was the fifth measure which had been brought forward within the last three years, for the adjustment of that question: his plan was shortly this—to deduct thirty per cent. from the tithe composition, so as to make a rent-charge on the first estate of inheritance, in the proportion of £70 for every £100 of tithe. By the bill of last year, power was given to the commissioners of woods and forests to collect the rent-charge; but this appeared to make the clergy too dependent on government; and they were now to be allowed to collect it for themselves. The provisions of former bills for the revising or re-opening of compositions, would be reserved: with respect to the regulation of the incomes of benefices, he would adopt the scale recommended by lord Stanley, last session; with the exception of the *minimum* of £300, which was then taken as the lowest point of reduction to which the clerical income should be liable.

The most novel part of lord Morpeth's bill was the provision by which he proposed to apply a portion of the clerical income to the purposes of general education; and he showed by a statute, (fifteenth of the twenty-eighth of Henry VIII.) that every incumbent of a parish was bound to keep, or cause to be kept, a school, in which English should be taught—an oath for its observance to be taken in all cases before institution—with heavy penalties both against bishops and clergymen for its infraction.

When this bill came to be discussed, at its second reading, it was strenuously opposed by Mr. Sharman Crawford, as wholly inadequate to the expectations of the Irish people; who would be satisfied with nothing less than a complete release from every assessment for

the support of the established church: it was also opposed by Mr. D. Browne, and lord Stanley; by the former on the principle of Mr. Crawford, but by the latter on one diametrically opposite; as he was wholly averse to the system of appropriation. Lord Morpeth and lord John Russell defended the measure, after adverting to the difficulty felt by government in steering between the opposition of contending parties; but this difficulty also was obviated for a time by the cause alluded to in the previous debate.

Among the leading topics of protestant discontent in Ireland, is the new system of national schools, introduced under the auspices of the whig government; ministers this session anticipated those attacks which they usually experienced on the subject, by bringing forward an early motion for inquiring fully into the whole of it. On this occasion the premier reminded their lordships, that the Kildare society had been in operation from the beginning of the century; but the discontent to which its system gave rise, among a large class of the Irish population, induced the king's ministers, very soon after their accession to office, to effect an intire change of plan. This was in 1831; when a board of commissioners was appointed to carry the new system into operation: much and continued dissatisfaction however had been expressed with it by a powerful party; five years had elapsed since its institution; and the commissioners had now presented their reports, as materials whence a just opinion upon the subject might be formed. He therefore moved, that a select committee be appointed for that purpose.

The bishop of Exeter availed himself of this opportunity to deliver a detailed statement of all the grievances which the adversaries of the commissioners were in the habit of alleging against them; animadverting severely on the virulence of the Roman hierarchy and priesthood against protestantism, and the discrepancy between the oaths taken by catholic members of the legislature, and their support of measures calculated to subvert and destroy the established church: also on the encouragement given by the board to the perver-

sion of Scripture, for popish purposes, by means of garbled extracts and unauthorised translations. His lordship was answered by the archbishop of Dublin and lord Plunkett.

CHAP.
LXIX.

— 1837. —

Government had been for some time engaged in framing a scheme for the arrangement of church rates, on principles which they hoped would be satisfactory to the scruples of dissenters, as well as to the claims of our establishment; and the third of March was the day fixed by the chancellor of the exchequer for his motion,—that the house of commons resolve itself into a committee on this subject; and the statement of his plan was looked forward to by all parties with much interest and curiosity. The speech of Mr. Spring Rice, on this occasion, occupied nearly three hours; when, after showing by a variety of details that the existing system, the grievances of which he placed in a strong light, could not be maintained, and proving that the voluntary system, as well as several others proposed, offered no solution of the difficulties, he stated his own; which was,—to take the whole property of bishops, deans, and chapters, out of the hands of those dignitaries, and vest them in a commission of eleven members; under whose improved system of management, putting an end to the present method of leasing church lands, he calculated that a sum not less than £255,000 a year might be recovered for public purposes. With a view, however, to protect the interest of lessees, they would not only be intitled to a right of pre-emption, but might renew at five per cent. under the improved value; with a farther power of purchasing the fee simple of church estates, subject to an increased rent, payable to the commissioners, and fluctuating with the price of corn: provision was also made for the usual payment of pew-rents; for debts already contracted by various parishes; visitation fees, &c.; whence a saving of nearly £180,000 a year might be expected.

Only a short and desultory conversation followed the announcement of this plan; but it was easy to conceive what would be the opinion entertained of it

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

by the ecclesiastical body generally, and especially by that portion whose interests were particularly affected by its provisions.

Three days after Mr. Rice's statement, a meeting of fifteen bishops, being all that were then found in London, took place at Lambeth palace; when they came to an unanimous resolution condemnatory of the scheme; and on the same evening the archbishop expressed in the house of lords a strong feeling of dissent from a measure, unkind to the church, as well as mischievous in its effects; which took from the establishment property which had belonged to it from time immemorial, and appropriated it to purposes which had been otherwise provided for; which tended to render the dignitaries of the church mere annuitants dependent on a board of commissioners, and to deprive them of all influence and advantages annexed to the possession of land. Considering the violent changes that had often occurred, his grace conceived that a conjuncture of affairs might arise, in which the whole property would be swept away at once.

This protest against so sweeping a proposition, and which was naturally to be expected from individuals whose interests were so seriously affected by it, aroused the indignation of lord Melbourne; who animadverted strongly on the undue haste and precipitancy of the primate; asking, whether he was not put forward on this occasion by those who had more guile, and entertained deeper designs, than himself; in order that his expressed opinions might influence those of individuals in another place. He deeply regretted the opposition which government was to expect, on this occasion, from the most reverend prelate and his brethren; but such opposition would not alter his course in regard to a measure, just in itself, advantageous to the church, and beneficial to the community at large. These observations of the premier laid him open to some very severe animadversions from the bishop of London: but however ministers might choose to consider such an expression of feeling unreasonable on the part of the hierarchy, the friends of the church did not rest con-

tented with this protest against the principle and policy of the bill by which they were threatened. A general movement took place on the subject throughout the country; and so many petitions were got up, deprecating the scheme as unjust in itself, and uncalled for by any adequate necessity, that it is not unfair to consider the fact of so large a body desiring the continuance of a tax upon themselves, as a strong testimony to the general attachment of the nation to its church establishment.

On the thirteenth of March, the house went into a committee on Mr. Rice's resolutions; which were combated in a long speech by sir Robert Peel; who, after examining the financial part of the project, declared that nothing could be more unjust than the scheme of removing a charge from the whole rateable property of the country and placing it on that of the church: of the landed property of this kingdom, a small proportion only was held by the dissenters; yet, for the sake of satisfying so small a section of the community, the rest were to be relieved from an impost about which they made no complaint. He also contended, that, if by any plan of this kind, consistent with strict justice, a surplus could be raised from church revenues, a prior claim existed to the benefit of it, in the hundreds of poor livings which required augmentation, and of vast districts where new churches were wanted. Mr. Goulburn asserted that it had been a principle of law from the earliest times, that parishioners were bound to keep their churches in repair; and he would not burthen his conscience by helping to relieve them from that obligation. Sir William Follett considered that by the law of the land the parishioners could be compelled to make a rate for the purposes of church repairs; but the attorney-general differed from him on this point; though he allowed that the case was so in Scotland. Lord John Russell entered into a very able and elaborate defence of the ministerial plan, and concluded with a high eulogy on the dissenters, for their services in the cause of humanity and civil liberty. Many other speakers took part in these debates which

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

lasted three nights ; among whom Mr. Gisborne and lord Stanley were remarked for their vivacity : the former designated the late meeting of the bishops as a mere cabal, contemptible as vile, for upsetting a liberal ministry by influencing a decision of that house : the latter put a very pertinent question, when he asked—to whom the surplus fund, which was expected to be realized from the new administration of church lands belonged ? If to the church, then it was an abstraction of church property. If to the state, then the dissenters had an interest in it ; and they would thus be contributing to our establishment, as much as if the money were paid out of the consolidated fund. When the committee divided on the question of taking the plan into consideration, there were found for the resolution 273, and against it 250 ; by which ministers soon perceived that it would be a failure.

About this time a political incident occurred, which derived considerable importance from the indication it afforded of the state of public opinion. The liberal party among the electors of Westminster had been for some time past dissatisfied with the inefficient state of the representation of their city ; and not without reason : colonel Evans had now been absent two years in Spain ; and his distinguished colleague sir Francis Burdett had scarcely given a vote in his place in parliament ; pleading ill-health as an excuse, but being suspected of growing cold toward the cause of the ‘movement.’ Accordingly a meeting was called, and resolutions were passed ; to which sir Francis responded, by addressing a letter to his constituents, declaring that he would at once apply for the Chiltern Hundreds, and then call on the Westminster electors to declare themselves for or against him. He should offer himself again for their suffrages, as a supporter of the laws and institutions of his country ; but as a resolute opposer of all the new-fangled notions, shallow doctrines, and crude projects now afloat ; and he denied that he had changed his politics : rather they who had made this assertion had changed. The constitution had ever been the inscription on his banner ; and under the

same he called on the electors to struggle with him against 'an unnatural alliance; an odious, yet ludicrous, combination of Irish agitators, popish priests, and paid patriots, operating on a well-intentioned, as he believed, but a weak and vacillating administration.'

Here were undisguised indications of hostility toward the party with whom the honorable baronet had previously acted; and so it was understood. To secure his re-election, sir George Murray instantly gave up his own pretensions; and to oppose it, Mr. Leader vacated his seat at Bridgewater: the whigs and radicals were sanguine as to the success of their candidate; who himself possessed no doubt upon the subject: but it turned out that they had miscalculated their strength; for the electors of Westminster returned their old member by a majority of 515. As they could not disguise to themselves their complete defeat, their disappointment was extreme. Sir Francis had fought the battle on conservative principles; he made no reserve whatever of his antipathy to the present reformers; and indeed expressed a determined opposition, against fresh changes in our institutions. He exposed himself by this conduct to much obloquy, both in and out of parliament; but he seems to have been supported by conscious integrity, as well as by the example of many other whigs of the old school, who were anxious to rescue our glorious constitution from the hands of assassins.

In the ensuing debates on a second reading of the church-rates bill, sir Francis, on rising from the opposition side of the house, was greeted with vehement applause from his new friends, answered by cheers of a very different character from the benches which he had deserted. His speech was less remarkable for any force or novelty of argument against the measure, than for the vehemence with which he impugned both it and its authors: he expressed deep regret at finding himself compelled to act against his former associates: it was a great sacrifice; but his whole life had been one sacrifice for the good of his country. He was answered by Mr. Sheil, who spoke, however, of the

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

honorable baronet in terms of personal respect, likening him to 'a venerable relic of a temple dedicated to freedom, though ill-omened birds now built their nests and found shelter in that once noble edifice.'

The ministerial project received approval in a very acute and ingenious speech from Mr. C. Buller; and was as strongly opposed by sir James Graham. An amendment moved by Mr. A. Johnston, a general supporter of ministers, being withdrawn, a division took place on the original resolution; when there appeared in favor of it 287 votes, and against in 282; leaving them in a majority so small as to seal the fate of the bill, which they did not attempt to urge farther in the house of commons.

Ministers, however, in abandoning the immediate prosecution of their measure for abolishing church-rates, were still disposed to follow up their inquiries into the present method of holding and leasing the ecclesiastical property of bishops and of chapters; with a view to ascertain the probable amount of increased value by improved management, with a due consideration of the interests both of the established church and the lessees of its property. On the thirteenth of June, lord John Russell moved a committee for this purpose; which was strongly opposed by Mr. Goulburn and the church party; while, on the part of the dissenters, Mr. D. W. Harvey expressed himself as little satisfied with his lordship's advocacy of their claims; for by his inquiries their relief from church-rates would probably be kept in abeyance for three or four years. He accordingly moved an amendment, which was seconded by colonel Thompson, 'that it is the opinion of this house, that after a fixed time all payment of church-rates should cease;' but only fifty-eight members could be found to vote in favor of his proposition, while 489 voted against it. When the house divided on the original motion, the votes in its favor were 319; against it 236: a third division also took place on an addition moved by Mr. Goulburn for appropriating an increased revenue, to religious instruction by ministers of the establishment; when the

ministerial majority fell from 83 to 26; so that the general results of all the divisions on this subject gave much satisfaction to the friends of our established church.

CHAP.
LXIX.
—
1837.

After the demonstrations by radical politicians at different public meetings, it was to be expected that they would lose no time in making their threatened parliamentary movements: accordingly, within the first week of this session the notice-book of the house of commons announced various motions for 'organic changes,' as they were called, in our constitution. Mr. Grote gave notice of his annual proposition of 'vote by ballot;' sir William Molesworth of a committee on peerage reform; Mr. Tennyson D'Eyncourt promised to introduce a bill for the repeal of the septennial act; and Mr. Hume another for extending the parliamentary franchise to every householder. Besides, a notice appeared from Mr. Duncombe for a motion to repeal the rate-paying clauses in the reform bill; from Mr. Ewart for an address to the crown to appoint a minister of education; while Mr. Roebuck announced a bill for the establishment of a system of national education, and Mr. Ewart for an abolition, in cases of intestacy, of the law of primogeniture. These and several other motions of a similar tendency affecting particularly the privileges of the peers, came to nothing; both parliament and the nation in general were beginning to assume a spirit very adverse to those who would have tampered with our constitution.

The great measure of the whigs, after the reform bill, was undoubtedly the act for amending our poor-laws; which indeed may be considered as consequent on the other; for it may be doubted if, under the old representative system, parliament would have felt itself strong enough in its hold on public opinion, to deal with a social disorder so inveterate as the ancient system; whose tendency was to absorb progressively, not only the resources of charity, but the funds of productive industry, and by the ruin of proprietors and capitalists to consummate the misery of the laboring classes themselves: nor, perhaps, could any party,

CHAP.
LXIX.
- 1837.

but that which had habitually assumed to itself the advocacy of popular rights, have safely brought forward a measure so open to misrepresentation in its apparent interference with them; though its real tendency was to raise their sentiments, and better their condition. All great social changes, however beneficial in their consequences, involve much individual suffering: it was therefore no sufficient argument against the adoption of the new poor-law, that it could not be effected without entailing hardship on the generation that had been brought up under the old system; nevertheless this consideration certainly supplied urgent motives to the originators of the new system, for alleviating as much as possible the necessary pressure of the change; and if an exception to the rigid application of the new law, in favor of those who had married under the old one, had been made, such a provision could not have been at variance with the principles of justice; nor would it have been inconsistent with mercy, if the commissioners had relaxed a little their rigorous regulations respecting out-door relief, when various unions urged relaxation under circumstances of peculiar hardship. Such cases of individual suffering frequently occurring, and being advocated by the most powerful portion of the public press, created strong feelings of ill-will against the law itself; although its beneficial effects were soon perceptible in the increased employment given to laborers, and a reduction of rates: it is not, however, in the nature of Englishmen to congratulate themselves on such relief, while there is reason to suppose it effected through the sufferings and privations of the poor. Strong opinions began to be formed on this point; and Mr. Walter, chief proprietor of the most influential of our journals, and a determined opponent of the new law, brought the whole subject in review before parliament, by a motion 'for the appointment of a select committee, to inquire into the operation of the poor-law amendment act, and to report their opinion to the house.' Lord John Russell objected, that such an inquiry, if it were not intended to pro-

pose a repeal of the whole act, would be vague and desultory; and he moved as an amendment, which he thought would better meet all the objects which the honorable gentleman had in view—‘that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the administration of the relief of the poor, under the orders and regulations issued by the commissioners appointed under the provisions of the poor-law amendment act.’ In his answer to the statements of cruelty, hardship, and bad arrangement, brought forward by the mover and seconder of the original question, lord John observed, that his only difficulty was, to compress within a moderate compass the voluminous mass of evidence with which he was furnished from persons of all classes, tending in the strongest manner to show the great advantages of the new system: as an example of this, he instanced the state of East Kent, formerly one of our most pauperised districts; where out of 160,000 inhabitants only fifty-five able-bodied laborers had been inmates of the union-house at one time. In the debates, however, which followed, it was urged, that a paucity of inmates in the union-house was no proof of the well working of the system, as regarded the poor: they might be enduring extreme misery, and yet prefer that lot to the treatment they were likely to receive in such a receptacle: every thing, however, which could be alleged for or against the system was brought forward at this period, when lord John Russell’s amendment was unanimously carried; Mr. Walter readily withdrawing his motion, on an assurance given him by the chancellor of the exchequer, that government had no intention, by proposing such an amendment, to exclude any topic of inquiry which was not directly opposed to the principle of the bill.

The committee began its inquiry immediately, and continued it almost daily; but such was the minuteness of examination, the mass of conflicting evidence, and the consequent slowness of its progress, that on the sixteenth of June Mr. Walter signified his intention of withdrawing his attendance; a resolution, he said, to which Mr. D. W. Harvey, who had been his strenu-

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

ous colleague, had long come, as well as himself. The committee had as yet gone through only two cases which he had brought forward; for as soon as he alleged any instance of cruelty or maladministration, he was overwhelmed by a host of poor-law commissioners, chairmen of boards, clerks, guardians, and relieving officers; who poured in such a mass of general documents as it was difficult for him to estimate, or enter upon: in fact every thing tended to justify his original dissatisfaction with the committee; composed as it was of a majority of gentlemen opposed to its object, with two ministers, an ex-poor-law commissioner, and seven or eight chairmen of boards; against several of whom he had received complaints. The committee however continued their labors to the prorogation of parliament; about which time they made their report; the result of their examinations proving to them that the introduction of the new law had effected a considerable improvement in the character and condition of our poor; that its operation was satisfactory, and ought to be maintained: moreover that the administration of the system had been in the main judicious; the boards of guardians appeared to be very attentive to their duties, and the authority of the commissioners, as far as they could judge, to be exercised with great discretion. In conclusion they recommended the resumption of this inquiry next session, and suggested certain important points as subjects for investigation.

Early this session the commissioners who had been appointed to inquire into the ground of complaints in Canada, laid their report before both houses; and on the sixth of March lord John Russell brought the subject under consideration of the commons; prefacing it with a very candid speech, highly conciliatory toward the agitators of that province: having stated the complaints that had been alleged, and the difficulties of the case, his lordship next proceeded to state his remedies. It was now four years and a half, since the judges had received their salaries: hence it was proposed to apply a certain portion of the Canadian

revenue to such payments as in their rejected bill of supply of 1833 the assembly had, under certain conditions, agreed to: the total amount of these would be £148,000; and in this they would be simply applying the revenue of the colony to the uses of the colony. It was next proposed to adopt a recommendation of the commissioners, in excluding judges from the legislative council; also to provide, that in future the members of that body should not be so exclusively of English race; but alternatively one of British and one of French: with respect to the executive council, that there should not be more than two or three official persons in it; the others being selected by the legislative council and from the house of assembly: the privileges of the North American land company, as secured to them by act of parliament, would be maintained inviolate, a provision being made to prevent any abuse of them: as it seemed admitted that the complaints against the tenures act were in some respects well founded, that act would be repealed, the vested rights of individuals being respected. Whereas great complaints had been made of the obstructions thrown in the way of the commerce of Upper Canada by the lower province, which exacted heavy duties on the river, it was proposed that, with the assent of the two legislatures, a joint committee of twenty-four persons should sit at Montreal, with power to prepare laws and regulations on all matters of reciprocal intercourse.

These propositions were embodied in a series of ten resolutions; the first of which lord John moved for adoption, but they met with violent opposition from the radical section of his lordship's allies, especially from Mr. Leader, who designated the measure by the title of a coercion bill, and concluded with an amendment to the fourth resolution—‘that it is advisable to make the legislative council of Lower Canada an elective body.’

It was observed by Mr. Robinson, ‘that the whole of Mr. Leader’s argument was founded on the very modest assumption, that the government, the commissioners, and the legislative council, had been decidedly

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

wrong; while Mr. Papineau and the house of assembly were as uniformly right on all points: yet while they deprecated any violation of the act of 1791, they brought forward a proposition involving a very important deviation from its provisions. It was avowed by the organs of Mr. Papineau's faction, that the object of the French Canadians was to preserve what they called their nationality, even at the price of separation from this country; and that they especially sought to prevent the immigration of British settlers, which might destroy their preponderance. This was a course of policy not to be tolerated; for we looked to our North American colonies as an outlet to our population and capital. Neither the Canadian, nor the British parliament, would be justified in stopping the supplies; except in an extreme case: that power was given them to guard their rights and privileges from invasion; not as a means of exacting changes in the constitution. With respect to the land company, any attempt to shake the principles on which it stood, would go far to affect all rights of property in the colony; the company had already produced great advantages, and would have effected many more but for the antiquated prejudices of the Canadians themselves.'

As might have been expected, Mr. O'Connell warmly advocated the cause of the Papineau party; which he strove to assimilate to that of Ireland; while he strenuously bawled out—'justice to Canada'—'give them an elective council, and the privileges of British subjects.'

Sir William Molesworth declared the case of Canada similar to that of Ireland; subjected as it was to the domination of a miserable monopolising minority, which arrogated superiority of place and treated the rest of its population as *aliens* in blood. Colonel Thompson urged the same topics; insisting also, that far from having any interest in coercing the Canadas, we should gain, in a commercial point of view, by getting rid of them. Mr. Roebuck followed with a long and virulent speech; in which, after giving an historical detail of the grievances of the Canadians,

he asserted their right to exact what they desired; and the inability of Great Britain to prevent their obtaining it. He also dwelt much on the example of the American revolution; and on the sympathy and assistance they would receive from their friends in the United States, when the flag of independence should be raised; and this event he predicted as about to take place, whenever the resolutions of the noble lord should be agreed to.

An able reply was made to this diatribe by sir G. Grey, under-secretary for the colonies; who, having appealed to all the papers on the table, to all instructions sent out to a local government, and to every act carried out in pursuance of them, asked if any thing had been done of which a free and independent people had the slightest reason to complain? Every grievance arising out of former misgovernment had been redressed to the utmost of our power; and now the house of assembly took up another ground, and declared, 'that if the constitution were not altered, they would stop the supplies: this outcry was raised by the lower province only; Upper Canada disclaimed any share in it. In the past year New Brunswick sent deputies to this country to ask concession on all those points in which the people of Lower Canada were agreed: an arrangement was accordingly proposed in principle and details similar to those now offered to the Canadians, and was accepted with expressions of deep obligation to his majesty's government.

The adjourned debate was opened by a speech of three hours from Mr. Hume, remarkable for nothing but an unsatisfactory indication of a letter written by himself to the Canadians in 1834, strongly instigating them to rebellion; but which had been designated by the house of assembly in Upper Canada as 'a detestable communication;' and received by them with disgust and indignation. Many other speakers followed; but no one vindicated the rights and authority of the mother country in a higher tone than lord Stanley, or exposed more forcibly the weak ground on which the colonists stood: for this speech he was thanked and

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

congratulated by Mr. Leader, who predicted that it would have the same effect on the people of Canada, as that of lord Lyndhurst on the people of Ireland.

The three first declaratory resolutions were agreed to without a division: but on the fourth being put, which included the impropriety of making the legislative council of Lower Canada an elective body, Mr. Leader proposed an amendment of a contrary tendency; when on a division, there were found in favor of the original resolution 318 votes; and against it 56. After this decision ministers expressed a hope, that the opponents of the resolutions would not farther obstruct their progress; but delay was evidently the object of the Canadian party, in the expectation of getting up a demonstration of popular feeling on both sides of the St. Lawrence. Mr. Roebuck availed himself of allusions made to important information collected in this investigation, to demand, that the house should not proceed farther with the resolutions until this were printed; and after some resistance ministers were fain to consent to such an arrangement. The committee therefore was not resumed till the fourteenth of April, when the fifth resolution came under its consideration; and Mr. Roebuck, after predicting the utter loss of Canada, should the resolutions be carried, broached a plan of his own for the settlement of this dispute; the two principal features of which were,—first to abolish the legislative council, and transfer its powers to an executive council of twelve persons to be named by the governor; which might have the power to amend any measure sent up by the assembly, but not to reject it, as that would rest with the governor only; and secondly to establish a general assembly of delegates from the houses of assembly in our various North American colonies, clothed with certain judicial and legislative powers, to sit at Montreal.

Lord John Russell justly observed on this proposition, that whatever might be its merits, the proposer had no authority from the colony to make it; and, therefore, parliament could not take it as a basis of pacification: with regard to menaces of rebellion he

treated them very lightly, and expressed his strong conviction that the Canadians would not find it their interest to place themselves under the banner of the United States: considerable discussion ensued on the right of control over waste lands; and Mr. C. Buller remarked, that the colony did not afford materials for an aristocracy, and therefore not for a legislative council: it might then be altered without affecting the dignity, or shaking the foundation of our house of lords. Mr. Roebuck spoke in reply, and very unjustly complained of lord John Russell, as doing all he could to insult and vilify the people of Canada; when his remarks called up sir Robert Peel, who spoke in a manner calculated to soothe the exasperated feelings of the provincials, while he supported the rights and authority of the parent state: the committee having divided on the fifth resolution, 269 votes were given for, and only 46 against it.

On the twenty-first of April, when the committee on the resolutions was resumed, Mr. Leader moved a postponement of their consideration, until it could be known whether the Canadians agreed, or not, to the plan recommended by Mr. Roebuck; and which that gentleman now endeavored to vindicate from the charge of absurdity with which it had been characterised by sir R. Peel. On a division, the postponement was rejected by 182 votes against 29: the house then went into committee on the sixth resolution, respecting the North American land company; and an amendment was moved by Mr. Roebuck, to defer all resolutions on the subject, 'until inquiry should be made respecting the circumstances under which the land held by that company had been obtained.' The company was ably defended by lord Stanley, Mr. Robinson, and sir George Grey; and on this occasion Mr. Grote, and others of the radical section, declined to support the amendment, which obtained only 6 votes against 166. Thus closed the discussion of this subject in the lower house; and on the first of May its resolutions were communicated to the house of lords in a conference. On the ninth of the same month, lord Glenelg brought the subject

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

under their consideration in a long speech; which, however, contained little that had not been dwelt on in the other house. He was supported by lord Ripon, who hardly referred to the point on which he could have given most information—the unconditional surrender of the revenues in 1831; a measure for which he was responsible, and which was the immediate occasion of existing difficulties between Great Britain and her colony. The only opposition to the resolutions came from lord Brougham, who objected totally to their principles and policy; while he dwelt much on a violation of the Canadian constitution by the advance of monies without the consent of the house of assembly; yet, as lord Aberdeen observed, lord Brougham himself was at that time a member of the government by which such advance was made. The resolutions were agreed to without a division, lord Brougham alone saying ‘not content;’ and afterwards recording the grounds of his dissent in an elaborate protest, which he inscribed on the journals of the house.

Many other important subjects also engaged the attention of parliament during this busy session,—among which may be particularly mentioned the state of the banking system; in which the spirit of speculation last year, the multiplication of joint stock banks, and the excess of issues, had introduced much derangement, and created a crisis in the commercial world, which tasked to the utmost the prudence and management of the Bank of England to deal with it. In the preceding session, a select committee had been appointed to consider the state of the law on the important subject of joint stock banks; which found so much difficulty regarding them, that it contented itself with merely recommending a revival of the committee in the course of the following session. Accordingly, on the sixth of February, the chancellor of the exchequer made a motion to that effect, disclaiming any hostility to the system of joint stock banks, and proposing to extend the committee’s inquiries to Ireland. Mr. Hume, attributing the source of our diffi-

culties to the Bank of England, which he contrasted very unfavorably with those of France and Holland, was anxious for the affairs of that establishment to be taken into consideration; and he moved an amendment, 'that there be an inquiry into the state of banking, and the causes for the changes in our circulation since the year 1833.' This amendment was supported by Mr. W. Williams; who considered that the bank had shown a reckless disregard of the interests of the country: at this moment instead of having, according to their own ideas of propriety, one-third of their issues in gold, they had only about one-seventh or one-eighth.

With respect to Mr. Hume's allusion to the seemingly superior stability of commercial credit in France, Mr. Robinson observed, that the fact admitted an easy solution. This country was the general mart of the world's commerce, where a large portion of the trade of Europe and America centered; now there could be no doubt but that the late derangement of commercial interests in America had contributed to our difficulties; while France, having had no share in these operations, had escaped all inconveniences resulting from them. Mr. Gisborne defended generally the conduct of our joint stock banks, attributing much blame to the proceedings of the national bank; and Mr. Villiers supported the amendment for extended inquiry, which he hoped might lead to a discovery of the true principles on which banks should be established. Many other members spoke on this important question; and when a division took place on the original motion, it was carried by 121 votes against 42.

Another emergency in which the Bank of England was called on to exercise the arduous and delicate office of interference for averting a convulsion of the commercial world, was occasioned by the crisis which took place this year in the American trade: a detail of circumstances leading to it is inconsistent with the limits of this work; but they may be resolved into two leading facts;—first, the overtrading spirit and rage for speculation which had prevailed during the

CHAP.
LXIX.—
1837.

last two years in the United States, conjointly with similar excitement in England: secondly, the sudden and extensive check which had been given to all operations in the American money market, through the measures adopted by president Jackson, hostile to the banking system of that country. There always has existed such intimate relations between the commercial interests of Great Britain and those of her ancient colonies beyond the Atlantic, that the least derangement of the affairs of either nation instantly and sensibly affects those of the other: but of late years these relations had become infinitely more complicated, by reason of America carrying on almost all her foreign trade, not merely with Great Britain, but with the east, and with South America, by credits obtained in England. The abuses to which such a system was liable were numerous and alarming: one only need be mentioned, which was not unusually resorted to. As the bills drawn were for four months, it became easy for the less scrupulous American houses to pay off one credit before it was due, by obtaining a similar one on another house; and when once in the market, it was difficult to distinguish the paper thus obtained, from that which was issued on more regular and legitimate transactions: the business of making these advances on the American account, although chiefly confined to seven houses, is said to have involved acceptancies to the amount of fifteen or sixteen millions sterling; while the actual capital in their possession to meet it was scarcely one-sixth of the whole.

That such a fictitious system should terminate in disaster, is not to be wondered at; and the catastrophe was likely to be accelerated by the reaction already beginning to take place from the simultaneous spirit of speculation and overtrading in England. A heavy drain on the bank for bullion set in last April; and, in consequence, she had raised the interest on her discounts above the market rate; a circumstance which compelled her to lend a portion of her funds to money dealers, who employed them in the discount of good

bills: now it happened that the paper so purchased consisted, in great part, of American bills drawn as has been described; and thus the bank directors became acquainted with the enormous amount of such engagements afloat in the market. They naturally felt alarm; and with a view to check the further progress of this system, gave the first shock to its existence by sending instructions to the agent of their establishment at Liverpool, to reject the paper of certain American houses: from some indiscretion, this order became known; and a general discredit of the houses concerned took place: yet they still continued to carry on their operations; and it is said, that at the commencement of this year, the outstanding acceptances of three leading houses was estimated at no less a sum than £5,500,000. At length affairs came to a crisis; and about the beginning of March these three houses suspended their payments; thereby occasioning the utmost alarm in the commercial world: this, added to the other engagements of American houses, amounted to about twelve millions sterling. A failure to such an extent might have been irreparable; accordingly the bank considered it a public duty to come forward to their assistance: this was so far effectually done, that the three houses alluded to were enabled to continue their operations until they had greatly diminished the amount of their engagements: but a shock was given to the whole system of money transactions with America; which, combined with the difficulties arising from president Jackson's measures, soon afterwards terminated in the stoppage of all public banks in the union, with an overthrow of credit in those republican states, from which they are not likely to recover during the existence of the present generation.

No part of the conduct of the whigs had been made a subject of severer attack, than the system of their foreign policy; the ordinary defence of which was, that its result had been the preservation of peace; which is, or ought to be, the grand aim and object of Great Britain: and it is a circumstance that wonderfully simplifies our foreign policy, as far as British interests

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

are concerned, that it is essentially pacific. Hence it was that our interference in the affairs of the Peninsula now became the subject of severe animadversion, as giving rise to feelings of a painful and conflicting nature, not admitting joy or sympathy in the success of British troops; many of which were engaged on both sides of the contest: and what made such a state of things still more distressing was the cruel and sanguinary character of the war, and the dreadful atrocities committed on each side. As might be expected, ministers were loudly blamed by persons who held very opposite opinions; some complaining, that they interfered in the war at all; others that they had not interfered in a more decided and efficient manner. They themselves maintained, that they had preserved throughout the strict line of non-intervention, without compromising the name and dignity of the British nation: but in one point all agreed, that hitherto their policy, whether wisely adopted or not, had been signally unfortunate in its results. On the tenth of March lord Mahon brought this whole subject under the consideration of the house, when the conduct of ministers was as vehemently impugned, as it was ably defended. It was said that British influence in Spain was nearly destroyed by these measures; that the object of the quadruple alliance was to appease the civil dissensions in Portugal, not to sanction the intervention of England and France in Spain; that although some additional articles were agreed to in 1834, yet lord Palmerston had thought fit to proceed farther, and suspend the foreign enlistment act, allowing 12,000 Englishmen to enlist under the banners of the queen. Though lord Mahon professed that he was not actuated by any partiality for the character of Don Carlos, or any desire of advocating his claims on the Spanish crown, yet that bigoted tyrant found an ardent advocate in Mr. Grove Price, a gentleman of great attainments; but so imbued with high tory principles, and with a mind so saturated by the love of legitimacy, that he considered the sufferings or destruction of a whole people as dust in the balance when opposed to

the claims of a legitimate despot. 'Every feeling and sympathy of his heart,' he said, 'was mixed up in this cause, which he had taken up on purely disinterested motives, because he thought it a just one:' but he overlooked the important circumstance that the principle on which the queen founded her pretensions, had been three times sanctioned by the Cortes; who, with the king, were fully intitled to alter one of the absurd and antiquated laws of their country. The honorable gentleman concluded with a glowing encomium on the character of Don Carlos, though without making any attempt to contradict or justify the fact that he had issued the edict of Durango; and that, in virtue of the same, several English soldiers, when taken, had been executed. He declared that the prince, and his minister the bishop of Leon, were far from desiring to re-establish the inquisition: but in this he was contradicted by Mr. O'Connell, who was much better acquainted with the intentions of those dark conspirators against the happiness of the human race. Mr. Fector was an able coadjutor of Mr. Grove Price on his side of the question; of which Mr. Gally Knight took a very different view: he thought the struggle going on in the Peninsula, was not so much between Don Carlos and the queen, as between the principle of despotism and the principle of freedom. Lord Francis Egerton thought, that if, as stated by the last speaker, the inquisition was ranged on one side as the inevitable consequence of success, the wildest extravagances of atheism and jacobinism were ranged on the other—he wished to see an end of the contest—and though he gave the noble lord (Palmerston) credit for desiring to raise up the edifice of national liberty; yet taking the history and condition of Spain into consideration, he doubted the possibility of such a result. Lord Palmerston, in a very clear and effective speech, defended the policy of government. The title of queen Isabella was made by the will of one king: it was sanctioned by his successor, as well as by the Cortes expressly summoned for that purpose: it was also recognised by a great majority of the Spanish nation. This

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

then was a question for Spain to decide, not for Great Britain. Our government had acknowledged Isabella queen *de facto*, just as the duke of Wellington's government had acknowledged Louis Philippe; though he was a king sprung from a revolution. His lordship took a cheering view of our foreign relations, and thought that Portugal was recovering from the struggles by which she had been convulsed, while Spain would resume her former proud station among European nations. He eulogised the present Cortes; and denied that the Basque provinces were fighting for their privileges; since the great landowners, as well as the towns, were on the queen's side. He differed widely from lord Mahon in his construction of the quadruple treaty; and in thinking that a suspension of the foreign enlistment act was more disgraceful to our age than to the enlightened times of queen Elizabeth. He then vindicated our co-operation with France in this affair, when we rejected the offer made by that country of sending a large army into Spain, and limited her assistance to the prevention of intercourse between the countries by a cordon of troops on the other side of the Pyrenees. Lord Mahon had complained that our merchants had been treated with neglect and insult: but this remark was more applicable to the time when Ferdinand was on the throne: then indeed our commerce was seriously impeded, and our vessels piratically seized on, or confiscated, without hope of redress: at present our merchants had obtained important privileges, which he pointed out. A disputed succession, said his lordship, was a subject involving general interests: in this case England did not interfere for the purpose of forcing on the Spanish people a government which they themselves had not adopted: it was not that kind of interference which, it was feared, our government of 1830 was about to exercise in Belgium: Spain had often been connected with various countries: but the object was, that in future there should be neither an Austrian Spain, nor a French Spain, but a really Spanish Spain; and he concluded by powerfully contrasting the efforts of gentlemen opposite to main-

tain the cause of despotism in Europe, with the successful efforts of the present government in pursuit of a more liberal and enlightened system of policy. Sir Robert Peel rose after lord Palmerston, and stated, that he openly disavowed all participation in, or sympathy with, the cause of Don Carlos; for he wished to see Spain in the settled enjoyment of a free and enlightened government: but his belief was, that the course adopted by our ministers was defeating its professed objects, and obstructing the cause of improvement: it was calculated neither to raise our own character as a nation nor to gain the affections of the Spaniards. Lord Mahon did not on this occasion press any motion upon the house; declaring himself satisfied with the expression of opinion which had been elicited: but it was thought that in this discussion lord Palmerston had the best of the argument, and general sympathy with the liberal cause of Spain, indulged in a hope of its success: but such a result seemed all at once to be farther off than ever; as news arrived of the complete defeat of general Evans and the British legion at Hernani; and the political opponents of government were not slow in seizing this opportunity of renewing discussion on the general principles of ministerial policy toward Spain. On the tenth of April sir Henry Hardinge, in an able speech, reviewed the question, and concluded with a motion for an address to the king, praying him not to renew the suspension of our foreign enlistment act, and not to employ his marine in the contest, except in that naval co-operation which he had engaged to afford, if necessary, under the stipulations of a treaty.

The motion was seconded by sir Stratford Canning; who argued at considerable length against the notion that the terms of the quadruple treaty required such an interference as that which we had undertaken. Mr. Grove Price also supported the motion in his usual strain; which elicited a burst of eloquence from Mr. Shiel; who, after arguing in defence of the construction put by government on the quadruple treaty, and entering into an apology for the present ill success

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

of general Evans, observed in conclusion, that it had been asked,—‘whether it was befitting, that in Spain, the theatre of so many of their best exploits, British soldiers should give way before bands of mountain peasants?’ ‘I feel,’ said the honorable gentleman, ‘the force of that question: but there is another which I venture to put to every man that hears me, and above all, to the gallant officer by whom the motion has been made. I invoke the same recollections; I appeal to the same glorious remembrances; and in the name of those scenes of which he was not only a witness but a sharer—I ask, whether it is befitting that in that land, consecrated in the annals of England’s glory, a terrible, remorseless, relentless despotism should be established; and that the throne which England saved, should be filled by a tyrant who has savagely and deliberately murdered her sons, after the heat of battle was over? Never! The people of this country are averse, indeed, to wanton and unnecessary war; but where the honor of England is at stake, there is no consequence which they are not prepared to meet; no hazard which they will not be found prompt to encounter.’

On the third night of adjournment, Mr. Otway Cave, in reference to an application which had been made of the term ‘mercenary’ to general Evans and his companions in arms, vindicated them from such an aspersion. Mr. Roebuck, after expressing his disbelief that a constitutional government could be established in any country by foreign interference; and designating ours, as a monstrous piece of patchwork, pertinently enough, and in rather a Demosthenian strain, observed—‘At all events, if we must interfere, let us fit out a British navy; let us send out by it a British army; and let that army land in Spain, and fight under the British flag.’ Such a plan would certainly have been the wisest; for now we were not suppressing but rather fomenting discord; and such a plan would have squared in some measure with the sentiments of sir William Follett; who having manifested indignation at the infamous cruelties exercised

by both parties, expressed strongly 'the interest which he felt in withdrawing a large body of Englishmen from the demoralising effects of a contest carried on with such a reciprocation of brutalities.'

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

At length lord Palmerston, after being repeatedly appealed to, arose, and in a speech clear in statement and close in reasoning, replied to the opponents of his policy; vindicated the British Legion; and after deprecating the atrocious acts of cruelty committed in Spain, asked—'whether history did not tell us, that it was in the character of the Spanish people, to be more reckless of the spilling of blood than any other nation in Europe?'⁶ And was it for those who had seen the arms of England aided by the ruthless gerrillas, to urge this part of the Spanish character as a reason for refusing them our co-operation? He trusted that one of the first fruits of Spanish regeneration, through the means of a free constitution, would be the creation of a public opinion tending to correct these faults in the national character.' His lordship then entered into a detail, and a vindication of the celebrated quadruple treaty; and concluded by observing, 'that however skilfully the question before them might be disguised, it involved nothing less than the alternative whether England should continue to fulfil her engagement with the queen of Spain, or disgracefully abandon an ally whom she had pledged herself to succor. This however, he said, was far short of the real tendency of the motion: the contest in Spain was but a portion of that great conflict now going on throughout the world: the house had to decide that night between two opposite systems of foreign policy; and even these were not isolated principles, which might be taken or rejected by themselves; they were intimately connected with, and deeply affected, all our domestic interests; for the object of one party was, to support Carlos and despotism; of the other, to uphold Isabella and the constitution. In the days of the

⁶ Surely this was a strong argument either for leaving them alone to play at this game; or for adopting Mr. Roebuck's suggestion of putting down such atrocities with a strong hand.

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

reformation, when religion divided the different powers of Europe, despotic sovereigns and free states were seen united to defend the cause of religious liberty: in the present day things were reversed in this respect; and we now saw men of the most opposite opinions on religious subjects united to retard the progress of political improvement: the opinion which that house was about to pronounce would, in fact, decide not only between conflicting opinions in England, but between antagonist principles, struggling for ascendancy, in every other part of Europe.

This appeal to the principles and predilections of the movement party, had its effect; and the secretary sat down amid loud and enthusiastic cheering. Sir Robert Peel rose in reply, but found it difficult to advance anything new on so exhausted a topic; and the discussion was closed by lord John Russell, who defended the existing state of our foreign relations, principally by contrasting it with that left by the honorable baronet and his friends when they quitted office in 1830. The original motion which had been for going into a committee of supply, was, on a division, carried by 278 against 242; so that sir Henry Hardinge's amendment was rejected by a majority of 36. This same subject was brought before the house of lords two days afterwards by lord Alvanley, in a motion for the dispatches of lord John Hay, our commander on the coast, relative to the affair of Hernani: but of course little novelty could be expected in debate. Early in June general Evans resigned his command of the British Legion; and the dissolution of that body, which was denied its arrears of pay, sent home thousands of squalid and emaciated wretches, living, or rather dying, witnesses of Spanish ingratitude, to crowd our public offices, and implore the assistance of our authorities to urge their claims on the court which they had so gallantly served: but they found that it is not the fashion of government to take up such a cause as this, however they may have previously sanctioned it. So also Messrs. Bell, the merchants, found this to their cost, when they sent a

CHAP.
LXIX.
—
1837.

vessel called the *Vixen*, laden with goods, to the coast of Circassia which Russia had placed in a state of blockade, without sufficient authority, and without notifying the same to our government. This vessel was seized; no redress could be obtained; and the British minister, after a slight negotiation, declined to press any demand upon the Russian government. Another instance of our truckling to Russia appeared, when lord Dudley Stuart took occasion to inquire of lord Palmerston whether a promise made by him to appoint a British consul at Cracow had been fulfilled. The noble secretary at once admitted that it had been his intention to send such an agent to the Polish state; but he had since been induced to depart from his purpose, finding that greater difficulties would attend it, than he at first anticipated. On the eighth of March, Mr. Barlow Hay moved for copies of the correspondence between our government and those of Mexico and the United States with regard to efforts making by the province of Texas to establish its independence; stating at the same time his opinion of its extreme importance, and the suspicions he entertained of the ambitious projects of the American government in this respect.

In reply, lord Palmerston observed, that he fully admitted the importance of the subject and its claim on our anxious attention: *but he strongly disclaimed any doubt of the honorable intentions of the American government in respect of Texas! whose language to congress was most consistent with good faith, and with the most scrupulous honor and delicacy towards other powers;* though it was true that some of the adjoining states had interfered in favor of the insurgent faction in that province; and a suspicion prevailed that they had interested motives for interference: the president, however, had required that they should not only suspend their recognition of its independence until this should be demonstratively accomplished, but should wait till other powers, against whom no such suspicions could be entertained had set them an example.

Mr. Hay had dwelt on the extension of slavery to

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

the province of Texas, as a consequence to be feared from its incorporation with the United States. Lord Palmerston admitted that such an effect might take place, and declared that he regarded it with extreme jealousy; but he saw good reason to think that, on the same ground, the northern states of the union would equally object to the incorporation of Texas.⁷ Under such circumstances the foreign secretary considered it his duty to resist the production of papers: in fact, we had lately truckled to an autocrat; and it was now our turn to truckle to democrats: Mr. Hay, however, was not so satisfied with his lordship's declarations, as to be induced to withdraw his motion; but he lost it, on a division, by 41 votes against 28.

Our colonial history this year, presents but little matter for history, beyond that which has been already alluded to in the account of parliamentary proceedings. In Upper Canada complete confidence had been re-established between its governor and the legislature; and when sir F. Head, on the fourth of March, prorogued his parliament, he noticed the happy results which had been secured by their firmness, loyalty, and public spirit. During the session, 109 bills (chiefly relating to great public works) had received the assent of the governor; and in anticipation of the demand for work thence to be expected, sir Francis wrote to the poor-law commissioners at home, requesting a large supply of laborers and artisans.

In Lower Canada parliament did not assemble until after the period which closes this history; but every day manifested signs of that insurrection which soon took place, instigated as it was by demagogues both in the provincial and the imperial parliament; by a defective estimate of the spirit of the British people; by a false comparison between their resources and

⁷ If his lordship was sincere in his expressions, he was singularly blind to the designs of American statesmen. We have lived to see the machinations of the American government carried out in the actual incorporation of Texas. Granting that his lordship had reason to eulogise the president and congress of 1837, on their principles of honor and delicacy, what must be thought of the difficulties of treating with a government which changes its principles as often as it changes its president!

political wisdom, at this time, and at the outbreak of the American revolution; as well as by exaggerated hopes of assistance from democratic sympathy on the other side of the St. Lawrence. Dissatisfaction existed between the executive and legislative powers in New Brunswick and Newfoundland, but wise measures and an improved system of government prevented any outbreak. In Jamaica, the government of sir Lionel Smith gave great satisfaction; and the system of apprenticeship among the slaves worked quietly and well. In our eastern possessions nothing worthy of particular record took place; but a degree of painful interest began to be excited by the reports from New South Wales. In a census taken at the end of last year it appeared, that the British population there amounted to 77,096; of which 27,831 were prisoners: the number of free males above the age of twelve was 23,121; while that of free females past the same age, amounted to no more than 11,973; the Roman catholics numbered 21,898. This fertile colony, full of resources, and possessing an admirable climate, governed on enlightened principles, and furnished with religious institutions, presented moral features of a very alarming nature: for instead of a free and simple peasantry, respectable artisans, and upright citizens, scarcely any thing was to be seen but the dregs of prisons; some still in a convict state; others indulged with a revocable freedom; and many arrived at incredible opulence, yet branded with the stigma of their original conviction. Such a state of disorganisation threatened posterity with so strange a combination of moral and political disorder, that the attention of statesmen was drawn more closely to the investigation and remedy of this evil.

In France nothing occurred affecting our political relations with that country still occupied with its trials of political offenders; but which were relieved on the thirtieth of May by the auspicious nuptials of the duke of Orleans with the princess Helena: an union which promised unusual happiness to the French people; but which Providence in its mysterious counsels has since

CHAP.
LXIX.—
1837.

thought fit to dissolve, by removing from this sphere of action a prince who bade fair to rival the best monarch that ever occupied the throne of St. Louis.

The military affairs of Spain have already occupied our attention in parliamentary proceedings; but the war now began to assume a new feature, in military insurrections and the murder of generals by their soldiers: in truth no contest in ancient or modern history exhibits such scenes of atrocity. In the midst, however, of these sanguinary horrors, the Cortes brought to an end their projected scheme of a new constitution, to which the queen-regent and her daughter solemnly swore fidelity, on the eighteenth of June: the summer however did not pass over without one of those acts of legislative injustice which tend to destroy any constitutional fabric, by the powerful indignation which they excite against oppressors. A bill was passed for the general suppression and confiscation of the lands of all convents, monasteries, and other religious houses, within the peninsula, the adjacent islands, and African possessions: and this was followed by another which abolished the payment of tithes. The successes, however, of Don Carlos, who advanced up to the very gates of Madrid, bade fair to nip this constitution in the bud; but the celebrated Espartero was called to the defence of the capital, and the Carlists were soon seen in retreat.

In Portugal, a ministry which the revolution of last year had placed at the head of affairs, and which depended on the most exaggerated notions of the people's supremacy, soon found those notions incompatible with any national administration of government; and the hostility of the clubs and national guards, was provoked by what was considered a dereliction of principles. In the beginning of January rumors of an intended insurrection excited much anxiety, and ministers still increased their unpopularity with the democratic party, by recalling a large body of troops from Alemtejo to the capital. The Cortes were to meet on the eighteenth, the day assigned for the expected movement, when the admiral

CHAP.
LXIX.
—
1837.

commanding the British ships in the Tagus, gave intimation to our consul that he had made arrangements for the protection of British residents; and for the security of the merchant ships in harbor. At this time the animosity of the Portuguese against their ancient friends and allies increased daily; the ambition and selfishness of Great Britain were incessantly attacked by the popular press; and a tariff of custom-house duties formed on the rudest principles of restriction, almost amounting to prohibition upon imports of manufactured articles, seemed levelled against our commerce: the eighteenth of January however passed off quietly; but so inimical to our countrymen was the popular mind, that the British admiral thought it necessary to issue a general order that ‘on account of the difficult position in which the queen and her royal consort were placed, and the great suspicion with which foreigners in their service were viewed, the utmost caution should be observed by Englishmen residing in Portugal with regard to private interviews with royalty; in order that neither the government, nor the people, might have any pretext for undue impressions regarding the intentions of England.’ In the mean time lord Howard de Walden, our ambassador, continued his exertions, but in vain, to obtain justice for the officers and soldiers who had been in Don Pedro’s service; and whose claims on the Portuguese government remained unliquidated. All this may perhaps be considered as base ingratitude; but when we consider the little interest our government took in the welfare of the two peninsular kingdoms, at the end of the French war, and how recklessly we delivered them over to their bigoted and tyrannical rulers, we can hardly be surprised at the revolution of sentiment against us which now exhibited itself among their people. The Portuguese ministry surrendered up the reins of government, after a defeat on the navy estimates, in May; when the Cortes threw such difficulties in the way of forming another, that the queen was obliged to tax her womanly ingenuity in overcoming them: this she effected by a very simple ex-

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

pedient: communicating to the Cortes the embarrassment of her situation, she submissively desired them to appoint a ministry themselves; since she was not permitted to form one: and this frank declaration had its desired effect on the assembly, which was at once flattered and propitiated by her request; assuring her majesty that nothing could be farther from their thoughts than such an invasion of her prerogative. Accordingly the ministry of M. Dias de Oliviera was installed; and no long time afterwards, the pregnancy of the queen being announced, diffused great joy over the country in the prospect of an heir to this ancient throne.

The Austrian dominions maintained their usual tranquillity, with the exception of some manifestation of an independent spirit of reform in Hungary. At the end of last year a resolution of the Germanic diet appeared, manifesting the preponderance of the three great powers, by which the whole confederation bound itself to deliver up political offenders to the state injured or attacked. The protection of the three great powers continued, as heretofore, to be extended to the republic of Cracow; the senate of which was moulded according to the peremptory demands of their residents. Nothing worthy of remark occurred in Belgium and the Netherlands, except that a treaty of commerce was this year negotiated between the latter country and Great Britain at the Hague; the provisions of which placed the two nations on a reciprocal footing, and accorded to each all privileges enjoyed by the most favored people.

Affairs in the cantons of Switzerland were much less satisfactory; the spirit both of religious and political animosity being in full activity within most of the states; while the federal constitution which united these independent commonwealths was found to fall short of its object; neither affording a guarantee to public order, nor securing to Switzerland a desirable position among the other European powers. Early in the spring an insurrectionary movement of the aristocratic faction disturbed the canton of Berne, where a

large party, dissatisfied with the constitution of 1831, was constantly framing machinations for the restoration of their old system: a revolution was meditated, but was put down by the activity of the Cantonal government.

Many of the principal cities of Italy and Sicily were severely visited by the cholera this year; and in Palermo at one period the deaths were not reckoned at much less than 1000 daily: both in Calabria and Sicily, the ignorant multitude gave credence to the most absurd fictions regarding this frightful malady; which raged the more violently, as the medical men were said to have abandoned their duties with disgraceful precipitancy. Differences existed between the king of Sweden and his Norwegian subjects, whose democratic institutions and national peculiarities, as well as their recollections of 1814, threw many difficulties in the way of their incorporation with Sweden; though these were ultimately smoothed down and overcome by the prudent and paternal conduct of its excellent monarch. The newly established kingdom of Greece might have advanced toward her proper place among the civilized nations of Europe, and might have soon fulfilled her destiny, notwithstanding the obesity of her boy-king as well as the turbulent nature of her population and native chiefs, had not the ambition of Russia, and the vile intrigues of France, interfered to undo the work which both countries had co-operated to establish: but Athens was selected as a convenient spot for an anti-British party in the East. Russia afforded materials for the historian only as far as her foreign relations were concerned: in these, however, she exhibited as invariable a policy, as she exerts an unremitting activity. Russia never effects by violence that which can be brought about by any art; and from the first she has been less indebted to her arms for success than to her diplomatic subtlety, taking advantage of every crisis in public affairs, and pursuing her schemes of aggrandisement, relying less on the resources of her own strength, great as they are, than on the fears and forbearance of other powers; and thus she has in little more than half a century

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

nearly doubled her European dominions; not only advancing her frontier in the old direction of Poland and Constantinople, but even daring to feel her way towards our Indian possessions: the progress however of this ambitious power has been lately checked in a quarter where she least expected it. By an article in the treaty of Adrianople the sultan had yielded to his conquerors that part of Circassia which was in the occupation of their troops at the end of the war: the cession was of vast importance in the eyes of the Russian autocrat—but the inhabitants, noted for their bravery and love of independence, and acknowledging only a sort of feudal superiority in the Ottoman empire, denied this right of transfer, and contended that the Porte, in withdrawing its protection, had forfeited every claim to their allegiance: in particular they resisted the dominion of Russia, with which nation Circassia had long been at war. ‘Who has power at all,’ they said, ‘to give us away? Our allegiance is offered to the sultan; but if he be at peace with Russia, he cannot accept it; for Circassia is at war: our allegiance is a free offering; he cannot sell, because he has not bought it.’ The principles, however, of natural right and equity have little influence with an ambitious despot, bent on advancing his unwieldy power: accordingly Russia has been occupied for several years in her endeavors to subjugate these gallant barbarians, noted among the Caucasian tribes for their bravery, intelligence, and personal beauty. She has possessed herself of Anapa and several other important posts in the country; but these are insulated positions, and obliged to draw their supplies from the Crimea, though in the midst of a most fertile region: for the Circassians, without fearing the advance of troops, or listening to proclamations dictated in terms such as Napoleon would have used, have hitherto disputed every step of their invaders with indomitable courage, overwhelming them by thousands in mountain passes, and sometimes storming forts and putting their defenders to the sword. But although Russia seems to be gaining little at present in these campaigns, it is

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

doubtful whether the Circassians can eventually hold out against their foes, unless some diversion be made in their favor; or at least unless they can be supplied with the munitions of war, of which they stand greatly in need, and which from their isolated position they find it difficult to obtain. To preclude the possibility of their obtaining such aid is the aim of Russia; and hence the capture of the British schooner, the *Vixen*, at the end of last year, which now occasioned much discussion in our parliament.

This ship, with a cargo of salt, having been for some time off different parts of the Circassian coasts, so as to engage the notice of the Russians, came to anchor in the bay of Soudjouk-kali, which was no longer in the occupation of their armies: having there opened a communication with the shore, she was soon taken by a Russian brig of war, conveyed to Sebastopol, and condemned as a lawful prize, on the grounds of having violated the sanatory and custom-house laws: it was farther pretended that she had, before her seizure, landed gunpowder and other war-like stores. In answer to the charge of contraband trading and violation of quarantine, the owners repudiated all authority of the Russians on that coast to make such regulations; contending that the Circassians were a free people; and the accusation respecting the gunpowder they utterly denied. Appeal was made to our government, but in vain: the British government, like some of its nearest neighbors, is ready enough to avenge the cause of its subjects on any small and impotent realm, but cautiously shuns every vindication of private rights with a powerful nation; and in the present instance it implicitly admitted the legality of the seizure by finally desisting from all claims of relief.

Turkey, generally the scene where European diplomats exert their skill and tact, demands but little notice, though the Divan was deeply engaged in negotiations with the pacha of Egypt on the one side, and with England, Austria, and Prussia on the other: but the result of its labors did not yet appear. The sultan Mahmoud, however, continued to pursue his reforming

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

career, and this year instituted a medical school, against a strong opposition from the Ulemahs; who were vehemently averse to the study of practical anatomy by Musselmans; and whose prejudices could not be subdued except by a proviso, that no bodies but those of Christians and Jews should be subjected to the operation of the dissecting knife. Another important and equitable measure was the institution of a council of appeal in commercial matters between Turks and Franks, composed of an equal number of each corporation, whose decision should be based on the principles established by the best commercial codes of law.

The circumstances of the American United States this year were such as to give satisfaction neither to friends nor foes: the former saw with great alarm the effect which president Jackson's celebrated circular⁸ was producing among states where the mania for speculation had been encouraged by a facility of obtaining paper money from the public banks; while the latter viewed with strong feelings of jealousy, the deliberations and determinations of congress with regard to Mexico, and her revolted province of Texas; —the irritating and unreasonable claims made against the former in her distress, and the appointment of an envoy to the latter, in the event of its independence being declared. One of the last acts of the president was the appointment of an individual to this contingent office;⁹ though the Mexican government did not fail

⁸ By which the receivers in the western and south-western states were directed to accept no payment for the sale of public lands, except in specie, or notes convertible into specie on demand.

⁹ This determination was consequent on a report made by a committee, and presented to congress on the twenty-fourth of February. Its first declaration was— 'that the independence of Texas ought to be recognised;' its second, 'that the committee of ways and means should be instructed to provide in the bill for the civil and diplomatic expenses, a salary and outfit for such public agent as the president may determine to send to Texas.' The following are the observations made in the *Annual Register* for 1837 (p. 365) on this transaction:— 'It is due to this committee to state, that they had not the front to preface these resolutions with any preamble or statement of reasons. When we remember, that Texas had been wrested from Mexico by a free-booting horde of 'citizens' of the United States; that the 'government,' the president, the commander of the troops in that province are Anglo-American; and that nothing but the aid of Kentucky, and other wild western adventurers, prevented Texas from relapsing into possession of the Mexican government; it must be admitted that the mode in which this republican committee on foreign relations, would administer inter-national equity, presents no model for our imitation.'

to employ what were its only means of resistance to such injustice, in a spirited protest by their minister for foreign affairs, Don José Ortiz: this however had no effect on the republicans, who, in the whole affair, and as the event has shown, appear to have taken a leaf out of Russian diplomacy.

With regard to Mexico herself, as well as the other states of South America, she and they were suffering all those miseries and losses which nations smarting under the rod of despotism are sure to suffer, when, after the acquisition of independence, they rush madly into the opposite evil of republicanism; laying themselves open to the ambitious projects of desperate and remorseless adventurers. To detail these calamities would require a separate and very lengthy volume: we must therefore leave them, and return to a brief consideration of our own parliamentary affairs, when the session was approaching that period which is usually assigned for its close.

In the month of June scarcely one of the important measures, recommended in his majesty's speech at the opening of parliament, had been brought to a conclusion; nor did any prospect appear of such a consummation before its prorogation, on account of the mutual obstruction of the prevailing parties in either house: hence it became a question, how long ministers would consent to remain responsible for the conduct of public affairs. Indeed, rumors of their intended resignation had been prevalent before the Easter recess; and at the opening of this session, lord John Russell had unequivocally intimated the resolution of the cabinet to make their continuation in office dependent on measures which they considered necessary for the peace and settlement of Ireland. It was now evident that no menaces would produce any effect on the house of lords regarding those measures; and there were not wanting persons to reproach ministers, and urge them on to redeem their pledge: this, however, they did not seem inclined to do; though their opponents evinced no want of readiness to occupy their places, whenever they should be vacated.

CHAP.
LXIX.
1837.

Such a state of embarrassment in public affairs called forth the skill and patriotism of Mr. Roebuck in his endeavors to unravel and clear them. On the ninth of June, to which period the second reading of the Irish municipal corporation bill, and the Irish tithe bill, had been deferred in both houses, when the order of the day was moved in the commons, the member for Bath moved an amendment, 'that the house should resolve itself into a committee for considering the state of this nation.' He observed on the extraordinary position in which the representatives of the people were placed: two bills had been sent to the upper house; but they were told, that the peers would not take them into consideration until something had been done by the lower house to please them. There was, in fact, no government in the country; and ministers were no longer in the same position as at the beginning of the session. They stated then, that they would stake their places on the fate of the Irish corporation bill: what had become of that bill? It was laid on the shelf, till the lords knew what the lower house intended to do; virtually saying, 'if you do not what pleases us, we will not pass your bill.' But obstructions and delay were not confined to the lords: every proposition brought forward for removing the evil had been distinctly opposed by government. What good then, he would ask, could be obtained by the farce of discussing an Irish tithe bill? Did they not know, that, if it passed that house, defeat awaited it elsewhere? Ministers, in short, were useless for good purposes; and, as far as the people were concerned, they were mischievous. When the reform act was passed, the unrepresented classes consented to forego their claim to the franchise on the solemn assurance of the reforms to be effected by the measure in all departments of the state: great reductions in the public expenditure; great improvements in every branch of the law, were promised: justice to Ireland was pledged; effectual means for educating the people were to be taken, as also for a general extension of the parliamentary suffrage; while

we were told that the government of corruption and tory domination was to be consigned to everlasting destruction.

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

‘The hopes then raised,’ continued the honorable member, ‘have been miserably disappointed;—the promises shamefully broken. There has been no reduction of public expenditure; no reform in the disgraceful administration of our laws: the education of our people has been left to chance; and so far are the days of toryism from being numbered, that the other night our liberal government was beaten in the people’s house on the important measure of poor-rates: to sum up all, it is now evident that the present government is doomed; and its termination is but a question of short time.’

We might here remark on the usual inconsistency of the radical party, which would make ministers intirely responsible for that numerical weakness which directly results from their want of more efficient popular support: but we prefer the confining ourselves to a detailed account of this speech; whence a fair estimate of the views of that party may be usefully drawn. The honorable member proceeded to give his own explanation of the causes of embarrassment, and to describe its remedies. ‘He would assume, for the purpose of argument, that ministers were honest in their intentions, and desirous to obtain for the people all legitimate fruits of the reform bill: but there existed two difficulties in their path;—first, the house of lords, bitterly hostile to popular demands; and secondly, an imperfect representation of the people in the house of commons: now two ways lay open to ministers—either they might hope to win over their opponents by compromise, and thus disarm opposition; or they might pursue a bold determined course, which would force their enemies, who also were the people’s enemies, to yield.’

In the description of this bold and determined course, the honorable member gave a fair specimen of his opinions. With respect to the government of Ireland, for instance, ‘in which they had suffered their enemies

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

to trample on their measures; delaying, changing, or contemptuously rejecting them, as the humor of their insolence suggested, while the promoters bowed themselves in the dust, and supplicated their foes to be moderate in their supremacy—what course, he asked, ought to have been pursued, instead of this crawling subserviency? One which they did not dare to follow. They should have raised on high the banner of freedom for England and Ireland: they should have boldly told the people of both countries, that justice could be obtained for neither, whilst an irresponsible body of hereditary legislators disposed at will of the fortunes and happiness of the people. That people looked on; they were beginning to grow angry with this hereditary band: a word from ministers; a hand lifted up by the government, would have created a feeling which the peers could not have withstood. But their hereditary privileges and their order would have suffered: be it so: it is then plain that you love those exclusive privileges more than you love the good government of the people: let the world know this—be honest in the matter; and do not pretend to be liberals with such feelings predominant in your minds.’

Thus it appeared that the crime for which ministry drew down on themselves these and similar attacks, was, that their political opinions did not exactly square with those of Mr. Roebuck and his party; in short that whigs would not consent to become democrats: but to proceed with his diatribe on this occasion—‘The dissenters petitioned for relief from an unjust impost; and ministers had declared themselves friends to the dissenters and to religious liberty: but how do they show themselves such? Do they come down to the house, and openly avow the doctrines on which alone these imposts ought to be abolished? No! they tell all who maintain the supremacy of the church of England, that they themselves are friends of the church, and enemies of the voluntary system: thus far they hold up the doctrines of religious tyranny; but, on the other hand, they bring forward a measure, the tendency of which is to support the voluntary

principle; and which can only be properly supported by an appeal to it; so far they are the friends of religious liberty: but the consequence of this proceeding has been defeat—ignominious defeat within doors; and disgust out of doors.’

Mr. Roebuck then dwelt, in a similar strain, on the conduct of ministers regarding the question of the ballot, and declared that the people were naturally disheartened when led by such men, whose principles they could not understand, and whose honesty in consequence they began seriously to doubt. ‘The people,’ he observed, ‘to save themselves from the inroads of a plundering faction must be ever alert, in a state bordering on revolution: now a wise ministry would endeavor to remedy this evil by one great effort; and having an enthusiastic people to back them, would so alter our legislative constitution, as to render a wise administration as certain in a calm, as in an excited state of the people: show them but a prize worthy of attainment and you will quietly have at your command a force to overcome any opposition.’

But whatever were the faults of ministers in rejecting Mr. Roebuck’s counsels, and neglecting his intricate and dangerous remedies, it would seem that the country would not have to suffer much longer from their mismanagement. On this occasion the honorable member undertook to predict that within a few weeks they would cease to hold the reins of government—that is, if the people remained in their present apathetic condition. ‘The public,’ said he, ‘feel, that little or no difference results to them from a so called liberal, or from a tory administration: this house, therefore, unchecked and unimpelled from without, follows the natural bent of its inclination to the tory side of politics: every day increases the popular indifference, and therefore strengthens our adversaries: in a few weeks their *minority* of five will have swollen to a *majority*; and then their hopes which shine in the eager eyes of gentlemen opposite will be fulfilled; for they will be restored to the cares and emoluments of office.’

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

Still this approaching consummation, might (according to Mr. Roebuck) yet be prevented—that is, if ministers would take his advice, and turn from whigs to radicals. Concluding with his old topic of the necessity existing to create an enthusiasm among the people, he declared that this never would be done by that class of politicians who are always afraid of going too far. ‘All great reforms,’ he said, ‘have been, and, while our legislature remains in its present faulty state, must be effected by the unrepresented. By them the reform act was gained; and so will be every measure of justice for Ireland. Create enthusiasm among them, and it spreads to the constituencies: allow apathy or indifference to prevail, and a feeling of caste arises in the constituent bodies, which become careless of liberal doctrines; toryism gradually regains the ascendant, and dishonest reformers keep up a constant clamor about our going too far. At any rate thus much is certain—ministers cannot go back; and if they stand still they are ruined: their only chance of success is to go forward. If they will heartily and cordially co-operate with the radical party, they may again have the support of an enthusiastic people, retain their present position and run a brilliant, useful career,’—by the destruction of our constitution; the honorable gentleman might have added.

His charges, however, met with as much support from the house as they deserved. Colonel Thompson, who seconded his motion, stood almost its only supporter; so that in urging their common complaint the gallant colonel pleasantly observed, that if he were speaking in the Greek language, he should use the dual number, as more accurately expressing the strength of their party. He added but few objections to those of Mr. Roebuck against ministers; ‘who had started,’ he said, ‘with a large stock of popular energy in their favor; but in their fear of the boiler bursting, had allowed the fire to go out: like Spanish generals, they had one eye in their own camp, and the other in their enemy’s; all their efforts for success being paralysed by the fear of being too successful.’

The honorable member appeared accurately to have estimated the numerical strength of his party in the house; for even Mr. O'Connell protested against this blame cast on his majesty's ministers, who had gained the affections, and had the confidence, of the people; while Dr. Lushington vindicated them from the charge of disappointing the expectations of dissenters; and even Mr. Hume, though he thought they had not done all they might have effected, standing on the great principles of reform, yet took into favorable consideration the opposition which they had met with in a course which he could not think so clear and easy as Mr. Roebuck had described it. 'He could not shut his eyes to the fact, that there were 300 individuals in that house opposed to his majesty's government: as for the tories the country would not bear them in administration; nor could he see any good in bringing them back to temporary power: the best way of dealing with the house of lords was to bombard it with good measures.' After such a defence by a portion of the radical party, it was thought that ministers might have safely let the question drop here: but lord John Russell entered into a vindication of himself and his colleagues from the charges of Mr. Roebuck; with whom he disclaimed any community of sentiment in the views that gentleman had broached in reference to the constitution either of church or state. 'He was decidedly opposed to the voluntary system; and he thought the people of the country were, like himself, still attached to the established church: as much also was he averse to an abolition of the house of peers, so loudly called for by the member for Bath. As for his doctrine, that men of moderation and compromise never succeed in establishing any thing good or useful, he decidedly thought, that to the moderation, and mediation between violent or extreme opinions on both sides, which had been exercised by lord Somers and the great whig leaders at our revolution, the country was indebted for all its subsequent prosperity.'

Mr. Roebuck's motion was, of course, negatived without a division. The opposition took no part in

CHAP.
LXIX.

1837.

the discussion, as they could not have supported the motion on the grounds urged by the member for Bath; while the great body of radicals, though much alienated from the present administration, were not anxious to replace it by a tory cabinet. It was apparent that between these extremes of opposition the whigs might continue indefinitely to retain their places, if they could overcome the painful humiliation of such a position; but it was a prevalent opinion that under such circumstances they would not long consent to conduct the affairs of government.

One alternative, however, remained as a termination of their difficulties, in the dissolution of parliament; for the present house of commons had been elected in the short interval of sir Robert Peel's administration; a circumstance which naturally tended to the success of many tory candidates: nor is it improbable that ministers would have resorted to this measure, had it not been known that the king was strongly opposed to it; and in the present relative state of parties they had no means of changing his resolution; especially as they were well aware that a proffer of resignation would have been eagerly accepted.

This obstacle, however, seemed as if it would not long stand in their way. Symptoms of decline in his majesty's health began to show themselves early in the spring, and increased so rapidly, that on the eighteenth of May he was prevented from holding a drawing-room at St. James's which had been appointed for that day. From this time his majesty's debility went on increasing till the beginning of June, when it caused serious alarm to his family, though he still continued at intervals to give audiences to ministers, and foreign envoys.

From the king's constant attention to religious duties, and the comfort he felt from their performance, it will create no surprise that he readily assented to the queen's suggestion that he should receive the Sacrament from the hands of the archbishop of Canterbury: accordingly Sunday the eighteenth was fixed on for the administration of that holy rite, the acceptance of which, and the public attestation thus shown

of his fervent attachment to that church in whose keeping so precious a gift has been deposited, was a source of great and manifest consolation to the afflicted monarch. It happened now to be the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo; and his majesty expressed an anxious desire to Dr. Chambers of living over so memorable a day: nor did he forget to send a kind message to the duke of Wellington, requesting that he would not, on his majesty's account, neglect to give his annual dinner to the officers engaged in that glorious action; a celebration of the event which king William, since his accession, had honored by his presence. Several times during the archbishop's sojourn at the castle he read the Liturgy of our church to his expiring sovereign, who declared that 'it was the greatest blessing of God to hear from his lips that beautiful service.' Though his majesty passed the night tolerably tranquil, yet decaying nature could no longer be recruited by the ordinary sources of strength and sustenance; during the nineteenth he continued to grow weaker and weaker; and as night advanced, a more rapid diminution of the vital powers was perceptible: about half-past ten he was seized with a fainting fit, from which he only imperfectly revived: he was then removed to his bed, and at twelve minutes past two o'clock on Tuesday morning departed without a struggle; the queen kneeling by his side and affectionately holding the hand of him, to whom she had been a source of consolation both in life and death.

'Thus,' says the document whence several of these details are taken, 'expired in the seventy-third year of his age, in firm reliance on the merits of his Redeemer, king William IV.; a just and upright monarch, a forgiving enemy, a sincere friend, and an indulgent master;' leaving, with his youthful heiress, an experiment to be tried—how far, in this age of acknowledged civilisation, an amiable and accomplished female on the throne, carefully brought up in the cultivation of her moral, religious, and social duties, can exalt the spirit of loyalty, assuage the vehemence of contending parties, and rally Britons round the altar of that con-

CHAP.
LXIX.—
1837.

stitution, which is the glory of their own nation and the envy of the world. I will not presume to anticipate the verdict of posterity on this interesting subject; but will conclude by observing, that on the twentieth of June her present gracious majesty was proclaimed queen of Great Britain and Ireland; and may God long preserve her in health, happiness, and prosperity upon the island throne of her ancestors.

INDEX.

A

- Abbot, Mr., chosen speaker of the house of commons v, 51. his zeal against the catholics vi, 69. his resignation, and elevation to the peerage 331
- Abbott, Mr., justice, (lord Tenterden) created lord chief justice vi, 361. opposes the claims of the catholics vii, 193
- Abercrombie, sir Ralph, his co-operation with lord Cornwallis in India iv, 64. appointed commander-in-chief in Ireland, and soon after resigns his command 335. takes possession of Helder fort, 410. superseded by the duke of York, *ib.* assists in the reduction of Malta 444. lands at Aboukir-bay v, 25. mortally wounded at the battle of Alexandria 28
- Achmuty, sir Samuel, gains possession of Monte Video v, 210. his gallantry at the attack on Buenos Ayres 211. captures the island of Java 471
- Acre, unsuccessful seige of, by Bonaparte iv, 415
- Adam, Mr., abandons the opposition iii, 3. duel with Mr. Fox 4
- Adams, Mr., envoy from the United States, his first interview with George III. iii, 194. chosen president of the United States vii, 92
- Addington, Mr., (lord Sidmouth) advanced to the head of the government v, 9. elevated to the peerage 105. quits the ministry 119. created home secretary vi, 15
- Adelaide, queen of William IV. her popularity and condescension vii, 243. provision made for her by parliament 280. her coronation 285
- Africa, expedition fitted out for exploring its interior vi, 327
- Agricultural distress vii, 438. 468
- Aitkin, John, condemned and executed ii, 264
- Aix-la-Chapelle, resolutions of the congress at vi, 364
- Albemarle, lord, joined with admiral Pocock in the conquest of the Havannah i, 276
- Alentejo, surprise and defeat of the Spanish army near i, 273
- Alexander, captain, his co-operation with the army in the Burmese war vii, 57
- , emperor of Russia, his accession to the throne v, 24. concludes a convention with Great Britain *ib.* declares war against France 118. concludes the treaty of Tilsit 201. proclaims afresh the armed neutrality against Great Britain 207. takes possession of Finland 238. prepares for war with France 432. emancipates his country vi, 26. moderation of his conduct at Paris 133. his flattering reception in England 151. endeavours to abolish domestic slavery in his dominions 399. his death vii, 89
- Algiers, its attack and capture by lord Exmouth vi, 321. reverts to its old system of slavery 326. blockaded by the French vii, 177. surrenders to general Bourmont 263

- Ali Pasha, his repulse from Parga vi, 143. his entry into that fortress 397
- Alien bill, its enactment vi, 358. its renewal vii, 23
- Allen, colonel, his surprise of Ticonderoga ii, 180
- Almadovar, count d', Spanish ambassador at the court of London, presents a hostile manifesto, and withdraws ii, 395
- Almeida, surrender of, to the French and Spaniards i, 272. taken by Massena v, 397. recaptured by the British 452
- Alvinzi, marshal, defeated by Bonaparte iv, 277. fails in his attempt to relieve Mantua 308
- Amboyna, taken by the British v, 382
- Ambrosius, archbishop of Moscow, cruelly murdered ii, 45
- Amelia, princess, birth of iii, 214. her death v, 372
- , princess, aunt to George III., her death iii, 302
- Americans, determination of the British government to extract a direct revenue from i, 329. discontents of 331. disputes between, and the savage tribes 335. treaty concluded by them 338. they resolve to abstain from the use of British goods 351. their resistance to the stamp duties 359. they appoint deputies to a congress at New York 362. discontinue the use of stamped paper 363. resolve to suspend all commercial intercourse with Great Britain 364. which is partially resumed at the repeal of the stamp act 385. discontented at the imposition of additional duties 445. form associations for the discontinuance of all articles imported from the mother country 461. make military preparations ii, 166. draw up an address to the people of Great Britain 172. expel the king's governors 186. instance of their bad faith 221. they publish a declaration of national independence 231. App. 421. review of their diplomatic agency 238. procure secret aid from France and Spain 245. firm and judicious conduct of their congress 251. miserable condition of their army, *ib.* letters of marque granted against by the British government 265. conclude a treaty of alliance with France 348. their rejection of the conciliatory propositions of Great Britain 367. they combine with the French in an unsuccessful assault on Rhode Island 375. avenge the destruction of Wyoming on the savages 376. their great success at sea iii, 53. discontents in their army 151. they recover Charleston 152. their severity to the loyalists 153. obtain a recognition of their independence by Great Britain at the treaty of peace 192. their disputes with the government of Great Britain iv, 183. they become involved in a quarrel with France 280. 359. purchase Louisiana from that power v, 84. their disputes with Great Britain amicably arranged 173. their opposition to the British orders in council 213. their increasing hostility 353. 381. they open their ports to the ships of France, and close them against those of England 432. their commencement of hostilities *ib.* their ill success in Canada vi, 17. vigor and good fortune of their naval enterprises 18. complete payment of their national debt vii, 452. money transactions with 530. desigus of their government on Texas 539. 548

- Amherst, general, despatches a force against the American Indians i, 336
- , lord, appointed governor-general of India vii, 31. compels Mr. Arnot to quit India 34. commences war with the Burmese 42. who are compelled to solicit peace 66. he settles a commercial treaty with the Burmese 67. directs lord Combermere to besiege Bhurtpoor, which is taken by assault 69. embarks for England 72
- Amiens, treaty of v, 36
- André, major, appointed to correspond with general Arnold iii, 45. his conference with that officer, *ib.* is arrested 46. conveys intimation to Arnold of his capture 47. intercedes with Washington for a commutation of punishment 49. is hanged as a spy 50
- Andreossy, general, French ambassador to Great Britain v, 57
- Anglesea, marquiss of, wounded at the battle of Waterloo vi, 244. succeeds the duke of Wellington in the ordnance vii, 126. becomes lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and advocates concession to the catholics 173. his dismissal from that office *ib.* defends the catholic cause in the lords 193. again lord lieutenant of Ireland 258
- Angoulême, duc d', his triumphant entry into Bourdeaux vi, 131. his joyful reception by the army 138. restores Ferdinand VIII. to arbitrary power vii, 3
- Anson, lord, his character i, 183. superseded in the admiralty 263
- Antwerp, its gallant defence by general Chassé vii, 271. surrenders to the French 359
- Arnold, colonel, his able support of the American cause ii, 181. arrives before Quebec 183. effects a junction with Montgomery 184. makes an unsuccessful attack on Quebec 184. 219. his retreat to Crown Point 223. is pursued by the British under Carleton, and defeated 224. promoted and rewarded by congress for his valor 303. he reinforces the Americans 314. attacks the British troops under Burgoyne, but repulsed 315. appointed to the command of West Point 407. enters into a secret correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton iii, 45. his conference with major André, *ib.* effects his escape, and accepts a commission in the British service 47. his proclamations in justification of his conduct 51. his expedition to Virginia 91. baffles the design of Washington 92
- Arnot, Mr., sent to England by lord Amherst vii, 34
- Arroyo Molino, remarkable exploit of sir Rowland Hill at v, 466
- Asgill, captain, selected by Washington to expiate the murder of Huddy iii, 155. saved by the interposition of the queen of France, *ib.*
- Ashantees, king of the, attacks the British settlements on the Gold Coast vii, 27. compelled to retreat 28
- Astronomical society, foundation of vi, 445
- Auerstadt, battle of v, 177
- Augereau, marshal, re-establishes the power of the directory by order of Bonaparte iv, 312
- Austerlitz, battle of v, 141
- Australia, its rapid and extensive improvement vii, 29

Austria, her position at the peace of Hubertsburg i, 296. her ambitious schemes regarding the Bavarian succession ii, 337. her arbitrary conduct in the Netherlands iii, 405. commences war with the French republic iv, 21. concludes the treaty of Campo Formio 312. renews hostilities with France 366. consents to the treaty of Luneville 441. joins the alliance against France v, 118. concludes the treaty of Presburg 143. lays aside her electoral dignity 156. again commences hostilities against France 341. compelled to accept a disadvantageous peace after the battle of Wagram 342. joins the allies against France vi, 77. extent of its territory at the congress of Vienna 188. its opposition to Greek independence 477. its jealousy of Russian influence in Turkey vii, 154. death of the emperor 451

B.

- Badajos besieged by Soult v, 434. captured by that general 440. retaken by the British with immense slaughter vi, 41
- Bailly, M., appointed mayor of Paris iii, 418
- Baird, Sir David, wounded in battle, and taken prisoner by Hyder Ali iii, 72. his cruel treatment, *ib.* commands a successful expedition against the Cape of Good Hope v, 171. wounded at the battle of Corunna 287
- Bajee Row, rises up in arms against the British government vi, 281. compelled to renounce all sovereignty in the Deccan 293
- Baltimore, unsuccessful attack on, by the British vi, 166
- Bank of England, renewal of its charter vii, 353
- Barclay, captain, defeat and capture of his squadron by commodore Perry vi, 118
- Barlow, Mr. Joel, his mission as ambassador at the court of Bonaparte vi, 21. his death 22.
- , Sir George, succeeds the marquis Cornwallis in the government of India vi, 262. counteracts the political system of the marquis Wellesley 263. superseded by Lord Minto 264
- Barosa, battle of v, 438
- Barras, M., his powerful patronage of Napoleon iv, 249. urges him to undertake the conquest of England 317
- Barrie, captain, his gallant exploit at Sagone-bay v, 470
- Barrington, lord, his character, i, 184
- Bastile, destruction of iii, 417
- Baylen, surrender of Dupont at v, 225
- Bayonne, its investment by lord Wellington vi, 129
- Beauharnois, madame, becomes the wife of Bonaparte iv, 250
- , Eugene, created viceroy of Italy v, 239. assumes the command of the French forces after the desertion of Murat vi, 25
- Beaulieu, general, his unsuccessful campaign against Bonaparte iv, 271
- Beaumarchais, M. de, commissioned by the French government to promise aid to the Americans ii, 237. his offers to Silas Deane 242
- Beckford, alderman, promotes the interests of the earl of Chatham in the city of London i, 282. elected mayor the second time 509. his reply to the king ii, 21. his death 30

- Bedford, duke of, his character i, 185. becomes leader of the cabinet 318
- Bedingfield, Mr., his loyal and gallant conduct iv, 252. his facetious answer to Mr. Dundas 253
- Bednore, its capture by general Mathews iii, 80. retaken by Tip-poo Saib, ib.
- Beer, unpopular tax on i, 209. its repeal vii, 226
- Belgium, its union with Holland at the congress of Vienna vi, 189. its discontents vii, 204. revolution in 247. its independence recognised by Holland 358
- Belleisle, capture of i, 211
- Belliard, general, surrenders Grand Cairo to the British v, 29
- Bellingham assassinates Mr. Perceval in the house of commons vi, 8. his trial and execution 9.
- Bengal invaded by Shah Zaddah i, 214
- Bentinck, lord William, his unsuccessful attack on Tarragona vi, 85. besieges and takes Genoa 142
- Beresford, marshal, assumes the command of the Portuguese troops v, 307. his admirable system of discipline 308. invests the fortress of Badajos 452. defeats the French at Albuera 454. accompanies the duc d'Angoulême to Bourdeaux vi, 132. his hostility to the freedom of Portugal 447
- Bergen-op-Zoom, siege of vi, 127
- Berlin, decree issued by Bonaparte at, to exclude British ships and commerce from all European ports v, 203
- Bernadotte, general, his defence of Antwerp against the British v, 347. elected crown prince of Sweden 378. emancipates that country from French dependence 432. obtains possession of Norway at the congress of Vienna vi, 192
- Bernard, governor, his hostilities with the legislative assembly of Massachusetts i, 386. by whom it is dissolved 465. he refuses to convoke the assembly 466. his departure from America 503
- Berri, duc de, his assassination vi, 450
- Berry, captain, his zealous co-operation with Nelson at Cape St. Vincent iv, 302. is captured by the French 358. his gallantry and good humour at the capture of Le Généreux 445
- Bessières, marshal, his decisive victory over the Spaniards at Rio Seco v, 224
- Birmingham, riots at iv, 17. formation of political unions at vii, 293. their intemperate resolutions 315. 321
- Biron, maréchal, his generosity to Rodney ii, 365
- Births, deaths, and marriages, act for the registration of, passed vii, 463
- Blucher, marshal, defeats Macdonald vi, 78. is repulsed by Napoleon 126. defeats the French at Laon, ib. takes St. Denis 133. his enthusiastic reception in London 151. defeated at Ligny 212. his eager efforts to co-operate with the duke of Wellington at Waterloo 236. pursues the French after the battle 244. enters Paris, and strips the Louvre of its trophies of victory 250
- Bois le duc, its surrender to the French iv, 205

Bolivar, his success against the armies of Old Spain vi, 400. first president of Columbia ib.

Bonaparte, Napoleon, his courage and conduct at the siege of Toulon iv, 136. his rapid promotion 141. his successes in Italy 198. his triumph over the sections and national guard 249. becomes general-in-chief of the army of the interior 250. his marriage with madame Beauharnois, ib. assumes the command of the army in Italy 270. forces the passage of the bridge of Lodi 282. enters Milan in triumph 273. suppresses insurrections at Milan and Pavia 274. defeats Wurmser and Davidowitch 276. forces Alvinzi to take refuge in the Austrian Alps 277. takes possession of Leghorn ib. defeats Alvinzi, and gets possession of Mantua 308. signs a preliminary treaty with Austria 310. quells the insurrection at Verona ib. re-establishes the directory of Paris 312. concludes the treaty of Campo Formio, ib. procures the release of La Fayette 326. embarks for the invasion of Egypt 349. takes possession of Grand Cairo 350. carries Jaffa by assault, and besieges Acre 415. is compelled to raise the siege of Acre by Sir Sidney Smith 416. returns to France ib. dissolves the Directory ib. is nominated first consul 418. makes proposals of peace to the British government 420. crosses the Alps at Great St. Bernard 436. enters Milan and Pavia 437. gains a decisive victory at Marengo ib. concludes the treaty of Luneville 441. and that of Amiens v, 36. banishes a number of jacobins from France 48. ratifies a concordat with the pope ib. annihilates the independence of Switzerland 55. created consul for life 56. commits numerous aggressions on the English 64. detains all British subjects in France at the resumption of hostilities 68. his seizure of Hanover 84. a plot formed to subvert his government 95. he gives orders for the trial and execution of the duc d'Enghien, 96. assumes the imperial dignity 98, crowned king of Italy, and incorporates Genoa with the French empire 117. his preparations to invade England 121. gains possession of Ulm 128. obtains a decisive victory at Austerlitz 141. makes peace with Austria 143. dethrones the king of Naples 144. defeats the Prussian army at Auerstadt and Jena 177. makes a triumphant entry into Berlin 178. declares the British isles in a state of blockade ib. fights a drawn battle at Eylau 200. and obtains a decisive victory at Friedland ib. concludes the treaty of Tilsit 201. obtains possession of Portugal 212. takes advantage of the dissensions in Spain to obtain military possession of that country 221. opposed in his designs by popular enthusiasm 222. transfers the crown of that country to his brother Joseph 223. has an interview with the emperor Alexander at Erfurth 266. offers peace to Great Britain ib. assumes the command of the armies in Spain 268. enters Madrid 270. takes possession of Astorga 280. recalled to Paris by the Austrian war ib. imprisons the pope 341. again enters Vienna ib. repulsed at Aspern by the archduke Charles ib. gains a decisive victory at Wagram, and grants peace to Austria 342. is divorced

- from Josephine, and contracts a marriage with Maria Louisa 377. his prosperity enhanced by the birth of a son 430. prepares for a rupture with Russia 31. sets out on his Russian expedition vi, 22. his magnificent display at Dresden 23. gains an unproductive victory at Borodino, and takes possession of Moscow 24. is compelled to retreat in consequence of the conflagration of that city 25. quits his army, and returns to Paris ib. repairs to Germany 76. defeats the allies at Lutzen and Bautzen ib. repels the Austrians at Dresden 78. his reverses ib. sustains a total defeat at Leipsic 79. represses the attack of the Bavarians 80. liberates the pope and Ferdinand of Spain ib. rejects the offers of the allies 81. deserted by Murat 124. repulses the Austrians and Prussians 126. who, however, reach the capital ib. abdicates the empire 134. arrives at Elba ib. escapes to France 196. received with enthusiasm by the army, 198. arrives at Paris 200. offers a new constitution to the nation 202. quits Paris ib. arrives at Belgium 210. defeats the Prussians at Ligny 212. proceeds to La Belle Alliance 221. attacks the British at Waterloo 226. his total overthrow 245. again abdicates the throne, and retires to Malmaison 246. puts himself into the hands of captain Maitland, and arrives at Plymouth 256. is sent to St. Helena ib. his acrimonious disputes with sir Hudson Lowe 257. his death and funeral 464.
- Bonaparte, Lucien, president of the council of five hundred iv, 417. refuses to pronounce a decree of outlawry against his brother ib. seeks an asylum in England v, 380.
- Joseph, created king of Naples by his brother v, 144. proclaimed king of Spain 223. defeated at Talavera 327. compelled to evacuate Madrid vi, 51. his return 54. obliged to retreat to Vittoria 90. his total defeat at that place 95. retreats to the Pyrenees 96
- , Jerome, created king of Westphalia v, 202
- , Louis, created king of Holland v, 202. resigns his crown, and retires into Germany 378
- Borodino, battle of vi, 24
- Boston, riots at i, 465. are suppressed by the military 467. renewed tumults ii, 18. exasperation of the inhabitants 99. is punished by enactment of the Boston-port bill 106. British army blockaded at 216. the town evacuated by the British 217
- Bouillé, marquis de, his capture of Dominica ii, 378. reduces Tobago, and other islands iii, 91
- Bourmont, general, captures Algiers vii, 263
- Braganza taken by the Spaniards i, 272
- Brandt, his seizure and execution ii, 63
- Brandywine, engagement on the ii, 305
- Brazil becomes the residence of the royal family of Portugal v, 213. its independence recognised vii, 91. commences war with the republic of Buenos Ayres, ib.
- Brereton, colonel, his trial and death vii, 295
- Bristol, riots at vii, 294
- , earl of, his diplomacy at the court of Madrid i, 227

- Britany, parliament of, spirited opposition to the French king i, 406
- Brock, general, his gallant death in defence of Canada vi, 18
- Broglio, marshal, defeated by prince Ferdinand at Kirchdenkern i, 229. is recalled 269
- Broke, captain, his gallant capture of the Chesapeak vi, 120
- Brooklyn, defeat of the Americans at ii, 235
- Brougham, Mr. (lord Brougham) his denunciations of the objects of the holy alliance vi, 308. his benevolent zeal for the education of the poor 359. 415. his proposal to government in favor of queen Caroline 421. meets her at St. Omers 424. his powerful defence of his client in the house of lords 439. his fracas with Mr. Canning in the house of commons vii, 6. his denunciation of a military premier 155. created lord chancellor with a peerage 257. his powerful advocacy of the reform bill 289. dismissed from office 413
- Bruce, Mr. assists in effecting the escape of Lavallette vi, 254
- Bruceys, admiral, his admirable skill at the battle of the Nile iv, 352. his heroic death 356
- Brunel, Mr. commences construction of the Thames tunnel vii, 91
- Brunswick Luneburg, prince of, his marriage with the sister of George III. i, 322. invades France iv, 26. compelled to retreat 31. resigns the command 185. killed at Jena v, 177
- clubs, their violence and zeal in the cause of protestant ascendancy vii, 172
- Buckeburg, count of, assumes the command in Portugal i, 271. saves that country by his talents 274. rewarded by his Portuguese majesty, ib.
- Buckingham, marquis of, his munificence iv, 55
- , Mr. his endeavors to establish the freedom of the press in India vii, 33. sent to England 34
- Buenos Ayres, unsuccessful attack on, by the British and Portuguese i, 280. its capture by general Beresford v, 171. relinquished 172. is attacked without success by general Whitelocke 210. separates itself from the mother country vi, 400. commences war with Brazil vii, 91
- Bulow, marshal, defeats Oudinot at Gross-Beeren vi, 79. routs Ney in the battle of Dennewitz, ib. commands the army of the Netherlands 124. commands a division at the battle of Waterloo 237
- Bunker's-hill, sanguinary conflict at ii, 174
- Burdett, Sir Francis, his censures on the house of commons in a letter to his constituents v, 363. committed to the Tower on the speaker's warrant 364. his liberation 365. his humane endeavors for the mitigation of military punishment 419. is tried and convicted for a libel, on the government vi, 387. joins the opposition vii, 517
- Burgos, unsuccessful siege of by lord Wellington vi, 52
- Burgoyne, general, surprises the Spanish army i, 273. attacks them by night, and disperses the army 274. appointed to serve in America ii, 173. his advance from Canada 311. takes possession of Ticonderoga 313. his insuperable difficulties 314. his failures ib. repels the attack of Arnold with great loss 315. fortifies his

- position, *ib.* compelled to retreat to Saratoga 317. surrounded on all sides *ib.* capitulates 318. terms of convention, *ib.* conduct of the American congress regarding the troops 321. throws up his appointments 392
- Burke, Mr. appointed private secretary to the marquis of Rockingham i, 357. his first display of parliamentary eloquence 372. opposes the expulsion of Wilkes 493. brings forward measures for the restoration of tranquillity to America ii, 155. his projects of economy iii, 9. his plan of reform 60. his scheme of public economy passed 140. his impeachment of Warren Hastings 293. incurs a vote of censure from the house of commons 403. his unqualified condemnation of the French revolution 430. publishes his *Reflections on the Revolution of France* 435. his irreconcilable quarrel with Fox iv, 7. introduces a novel species of oratory 84. his strictures on the character of La Fayette 160. his death and character 263
- , his trial and execution vii, 175
- Burlington Arcade, its erection vi, 401
- Burmese, their fierce and warlike nature vii, 35. their persecution of the Mughls, *ib.* they commence hostilities with the British government 42. are compelled to quit Rangoon 43. defeated at Kemmendine 45. commence an unsuccessful attack on the British position at that place 53. again defeated at Prome 58. driven from Melloone 64. obliged to accept disadvantageous terms of peace 65
- Burrard, sir H., supersedes sir A. Wellesley in Portugal v, 251. generous vindication of his conduct by sir A. Wellesley 257
- Busacos, battle of v, 401
- Bute, lord, his character i, 177. influences the counsels of George III. 194. appointed secretary of state 211. first lord of the treasury 263. his unpopularity 282. proposes a tax on cider 307. resigns 308
- Butler, Dr., charged with promoting a popish conspiracy i, 250
- Buxar, battle of i, 422
- Byron, lord, tried in Westminster-hall for the murder of Mr. Chaworth i, 368. found guilty of manslaughter *ib.*
- , lord, his death at Missolonghi vii, 92

C.

- Caledonian canal, opening of vi, 503
- Calvi, siege of iv, 178
- Camden, earl of, his character i, 183. directs the liberation of Mr. Wilkes 314. maintains the illegality of general warrants 323. opposes the taxation of the American colonies 382. is made chancellor 396. dismissed ii, 6
- , battle of iii, 42
- Campbell, sir Archibald, appointed to the command of the army in the Burmese war vii, 42. attacks and carries the enemy's stockades at Kemmendine 45. defeats the Burmese at the great pagoda 48. repulses the attacks of the enemy 54. makes himself master of Prome 58. totally defeats the enemy at this place 62.

- determines to advance on Ava, 62. concludes a treaty of peace with the Burmese 66. honors awarded to his skill and gallantry 67
- Campo Formio, treaty of iv, 312
- Canada, bill for settling the administration of ii, 116. its invasion by the Americans 182. its brave defence by governor Carleton, *ib.* the invading army compelled to retreat 222. unsuccessfully invaded by general Hull vi, 17. its dissensions with the mother country vii, 28. claims the attention of parliament 440. assembly of, refuses the supplies 444. affairs of discussed *ib.* 474. 484. report of the commissioners of inquiry concerning the affairs of 522. insurrection in 540
- Canning, Mr., his powerful vindication of the measures of Mr. Pitt iv, 364. his violent party-spirit v, 166. joins the Portland administration 191. wounded in a duel with lord Castlereagh 350. resigns office 349. is elected member for Liverpool vi. 56. joins the ministry, and again relinquishes office 326. his temporising policy towards queen Caroline 431. his defence of catholic emancipation 458. appointed governor of India 480. his opposition to parliamentary reform 494. becomes foreign secretary 499. his liberal policy 503. his fracas with Mr. Brougham vii, 6. obtains the appointment of British consuls to the South American colonies 16. his magnificent speech at Plymouth *ib.* procures the recognition of South American independence 18. his able support of the free-trade system 95. opposes all attempts of parliamentary reform 101. his vigorous system of foreign policy 103. his illness and recovery 113. accepts the office of premier 123. his popularity 125. encounters violent opposition in the house of lords 134. his financial statements 140. his death and character 144. parliamentary grant to his family 159
- , Mrs., her promotion to the peerage vii, 159
- Cape of Good Hope, assaulted by commodore Johnstone iii, 88. captured by the British v. 171. commotions at vii, 27
- Capo d'Istria installed first president of Greece vii, 177. his assassination 300
- Capua seized by the British iv, 408
- Caraccas, its resistance to the oppressions of the mother country v, 387
- Caraccioli, prince, is cruelly put to death by the orders of Nelson iv, 407
- Carbonari, their suppression by the holy alliance vi, 449
- Cardigan-bay, descent of the French on iv, 300. their speedy repulse *ib.*
- Caribbs of St. Vincents, insurrection of ii, 76
- Caribbee isles, transferred to Great Britain i, 275
- Carleton, general, his able defence of Canada ii, 182. his escape to Quebec 183. repulses the enemy 184. baffles all their designs 220. pursues the Americans in their retreat 222. he resigns his command in disgust 311. succeeds Sir Henry Clinton in the command in America iii, 154
- Carlisle, his trial and sentence for blasphemous publications vi, 499
- Carnac, major, routs and takes prisoner Shah Zaddah and M. Law

- i, 214. assumes the command of the British forces in India 420.
his generous treatment of Sujah Dowla 434
- Carnot, his great military genius and prudence iv, 141
- Caroline, sister of George III., her marriage with the king of Denmark i, 405. her misfortunes and death ii, 63
- Caroline, consort of George IV., her marriage iv, 227. parliamentary provision made for her 228. investigation of her conduct v, 151. her resistance to the restrictions imposed on her intercourse with her daughter vi, 64. excites popular sympathy in her favour 151. quits England 156. her name omitted in the liturgy at the demise of George III. 405. complains of the insults she receives from foreign courts 422. rejects the offers of government 425. her arrival in England 426. a bill of pains and penalties introduced against her in the house of lords 435. her letter to the king 436. her great popularity 437. commencement of her trial 438. the bill abandoned by ministers 443. reflections on her conduct *ib.* she returns public thanks in St. Paul's cathedral 444. contest between her partisans and the government 452. decline of her popularity 455. her exclusion from the ceremony of the coronation 467. her mortification 468. her last illness and death 470. tumults in the metropolis at her funeral 472
- Cash payments at the Bank, suspension of iv, 290. reflections on that measure 292. legislative enactments for their resumption vi, 369
- Cassel, capture of, by prince Ferdinand i, 270
- Castlereagh, lord, accepts the office of foreign secretary v, 119. joins the Portland administration 191. engaged in trafficking for seats in parliament 295. plans a fatal expedition to the Scheldt 344. his duel with Mr. Canning 348. resigns his office 349. his defence of the Walcheren expedition 357. rejoins the Perceval cabinet vi, 5. deputed as ambassador to the head quarters of the allies 123. his spirited remonstrance 127. approval of his conduct by the house of commons 149. an ambassador at the congress of Vienna 159. his restrictions on public liberty by the introduction of the six acts 393. palliates the enormities of the Turks 496. puts a period to his existence 498
- Catamaran project, its failure v, 103
- Catherine II. empress of Russia, imprisons her husband, and ascends the imperial throne i, 267. withdraws her troops from the service of Prussia 268. her political sagacity 301. acquires an ascendancy in Poland 342. her conquests in Turkey ii, 32. refuses to hire her forces to Great Britain for the suppression of the Americans 201. endeavors to injure Britain by the establishment of an armed neutrality iii, 106. her death and character iv, 282
- Cathcart, general, commands the troops in the expedition to Denmark v, 204
- Catholic association, its establishment vii, 24. is re-organised 170. its great influence, *ib.* announces its dissolution 181
- Catholic relief bill, its introduction to the commons vii, 181. presented to the lords 191. receives the royal assent 198
- Catholics, persecution of, in Scotland ii, 393. destruction of

- their chapels and dwelling-houses during the riots in London iii, 23. relieved from the operation of penal laws iv, 9. their committee in Ireland, its violence, &c. v. 426
- Cato-street conspiracy, account of vi, 406. apprehension and punishment of its contrivers 409
- Chads, captain, invested with the command of the naval expedition to Kemmendine vii, 51. his zealous co-operation with the army 54. superseded by captain Alexander 56. commands the flotilla at Prome 59. a British commissioner to conclude peace with the Burmese 66
- Chalier, his execution at Lyons iv, 127. impious fete in honor of his memory 135
- Chandageer, unsuccessful attack on i, 423. is taken by sir Robert Fletcher 433
- Charette, general, his gallant defence of La Vendée iv, 238. completely defeated by general Hoche, 264
- Charleroi taken by the French republicans iv, 191
- Charles X., his accession to the throne of France vii, 30. his expulsion 246
- IV., king of Spain, resigns his crown into the hands of Napoleon v, 223
- of Austria, archduke, his military genius iv, 265. defeats general Jourdan 266. drives Moreau across the Rhine 268. liberates Germany from the presence of the French 270. again defeats Jourdan 400. is deprived of his command 432. repulses Bonaparte at Aspern v, 341. defeated by him at Wagram, 342
- Charleston, surrender of that city to the British iii, 40. recovered by the Americans 152
- Charlotte Sophia, daughter of the duke of Mecklenburg Strelitz, demanded in marriage by George III. i, 235. her nuptials 237. her coronation 238. parliamentary grant to her 242. Buckingham-house purchased for her residence 254. her encouragement of English manufactures 354. her domestic habits ii, 49. is entrusted with the care of his majesty's person during his illness v, 376. her death and character vi, 361
- , princess, daughter of George IV., her birth iv, 258. restrictions imposed on her intercourse with her mother vi, 64. her flight from the control of her father 154. her return 155. united to the prince of Saxe Coburg 313. her death 346
- Chartres, duc de, (Louis Philippe) escapes to the Austrian camp iv, 112. raised to the throne of France vii, 246
- Chassé, general, his gallant defence of Antwerp vii, 271. surrenders to marshal Gerard 359
- Chatham, earl of, (W. Pitt) his character i, 185. his determination to adhere to the Prussian alliance 193. his rejection of the offer of a separate peace with France 226. recommends an immediate declaration of war with Spain 229. is opposed by the majority of the cabinet, *ib.* resigns the seals 231. opposes peace with France 282. his objections to the preliminary treaty of Fontainebleau 293. his interview with the king 316. condemns the pro-

- secution of Wilkes 321. opposes American taxation 334. is unwilling to accept office with the king's friends 355. his quarrel with lord Temple 392. accepts the office of privy seal, and is raised to the peerage 396. makes an unsuccessful attempt to establish a northern confederacy 398. becomes unpopular 399. his increasing embarrassments 403. resigns office 488. his speeches on American and domestic affairs ii, 2. his violent motions 13. his opinions on American resistance 140. deprecates the farther continuance of hostilities 272. his indignant remonstrances at the employment of savages 326. his remarks on the capitulation of Burgoyne's army 329. his assertions contradicted by lord Amherst 330. his last appearance in the house of peers 357. his closing speech, *ib.* his death 360. honors paid to his memory 361
- Chatham, earl of, appointed to the command of an expedition to the Scheldt v, 345. gains possession of Flushing 346. advances to Walcheren 347. returns to England, *ib.*
- Chauvelin, M., his correspondence with lord Grenville iv, 82
- Chaworth, Mr., killed in a duel with lord Byron i, 368
- Cherokee Indians, chastisement inflicted on i, 212
- Chesapeake, its capture by captain Broke, of the Shannon vi, 120
- Cheyte Sing, rajah of Benares, his oppression and arrest by Warren Hastings ii, 289. is deposed 290
- Chili, its separation from the mother country vi, 400
- China, restrictions on its trade removed vii, 354
- Choiseul, duc de, displaced by the intrigues of madame du Barry ii, 34
- Cholera, its ravages in India vii, 298. its rise and progress in Britain, *ib.* ravages of in Italy and Sicily 545.
- Christ church, Oxford, fire at v, 352
- Church rates, scheme for the arrangement of vii, 513. abandoned 518
- Churches, parliamentary grant for the erection of vi, 354
- Cider tax imposed i, 307. repealed 384
- Cintra, convention of v, 255
- Ciudad Rodrigo, its capture by the French v, 395. retaken by the British vi, 31
- Clairfait, general, assists the duke of York at the capture of Valenciennes iv, 115. defeated by the republicans 191. his able and successful campaign 243
- Clapperton, captain, sets out on an expedition to Africa vii, 89. dies at Soccatoo, *ib.*
- Clarke, Mrs., her deposition to the charges instituted against the duke of York v, 293
- Clergy, their petition against subscription to the thirty-nine articles, rejected by the commons ii, 50
- Clinton, sir Henry, despatched by government to America ii, 173. his gallantry at Bunker's hill 174. projects an unsuccessful attack on Sullivan's island 225. gains possession of Rhode island 251. his expedition up the Hudson 315. takes possession of forts Clinton and Montgomery, *ib.* a division of his army burns King-

- ston, *ib.* he retreats to New York, *ib.* takes the command of the British army 369. harassed by Washington in his retreat on New York 372. takes Stony Point and Verplanks 409. his expedition against South Carolina, and siege of Charleston *iii*, 39. gains possession of that city, and reduces the whole province 40. retires to New York 41. intercedes with Washington for the life of major André 48. is recalled 154
- Clinton, fort, captured by Sir Henry Clinton *ii*, 316
- Clive, lord, appointed governor of India *i*, 428. his sentiments and conduct on his arrival, *ib.* concludes a treaty with the nabob of Oude 432. his arrangements respecting the island trade 435. his reduction of military expenses, and stoppage of double pay 437. conspiracy of his officers suppressed by his decision 438. his departure for England 441. is arraigned in the house of commons *ii*, 81. his defence 82. his death 83
- Cobbett, Mr., imprisoned and fined for a libel on the German legion *v*, 416. his remarks on the trial of queen Caroline *vi*, 423. 432. 436. becomes member for Oldham *vii*, 400
- Cochrane, lord, convicted of a fraud at the stock-exchange *vi*, 156. his degradation and imprisonment, *ib.* is re-elected member for Westminster, *ib.* his escape from prison, and re-capture 307. is appointed commander of the Chilian navy 400
-
- , sir Alexander, assists in the capture of the city of Washington *vi*, 164. makes an unsuccessful attack on Baltimore 166
- Cockerell, Mr., purchase of the *relievos* discovered by him at Phigalia by parliament *vi*, 328
- Codrington, sir Edward, commands the combined squadrons of Great Britain, France, and Russia *vii*, 151. gains the victory at Navarino 152
- Coghlan, lieutenant, gallant exploit of *iv*. 442
- Colburg taken by the Russians *i*, 219
- Collier, sir George, his support of the British incursion in Connecticut *ii*, 410. causes the disaster of the Americans at Penobscot *ib.* resigns his naval command, *ib.*
- Collingwood, admiral, takes his station off Cadiz to watch the Spanish fleet *v*, 124. his admirable manœuvres to bring the enemy to action 129. his inimitable skill and gallantry in the battle of Trafalgar 133. assumes the chief command after the death of Nelson 136. honors conferred on him 138. his active and judicious co-operation with the Spanish patriots 240. his death 414.
- Columbia, its emancipation from Spain *vi*, 400. Bolivar elected its first president, *ib.*
- Combermere, lord, his siege and capture of Bhurtpoor *vii*, 69. he is raised to the dignity of Viscount 71
- Commercial panic *vii*, 85. measures adopted for its relief by the legislature 92
- Condé, prince of, commander of the army of the Lower Rhine *i*, 269
-
- , garrison of, surrenders to the allies *iv*, 116. recaptured by the French 203

- Connecticut, expedition in by the British ii, 407
- Constantine, grand duke, his renunciation of the throne of Russia vii, 90
- Contractors excluded from a seat in the house of commons iii, 135
- Conway, lieutenant-general, deprived of his commission for his vote in favor of Wilkes i, 328. becomes secretary of state in the Rockingham administration 357. is superseded 447. his plan of reconciliation with the American provinces iii, 21
- Cook, captain, his voyage to the south seas under the patronage of George III. i, 480. his death ii, 264
- Coote, colonel, invests and takes Pondicherry i, 213. defeats Hyder Ali iii, 74. 77. his death 79.
- Copenhagen, battle of v, 18
- Copley, sir John, (lord Lyndhurst) his powerful opposition to the catholic claims vii, 117. becomes lord chancellor 125. advocates the removal of catholic restrictions 192. displaced by lord Brougham 257. whom he succeeds 413. again relinquishes office 426. opposes the municipal reform bill 433
- Corbett, major, surrenders St. Helier into the hands of the French iii, 82. is tried by a court-martial, and dismissed the service 84
- Corn, new legislative regulations respecting v, 94. fresh prohibitory duties vi, 203. their unpopularity 204. discussion on their nature and tendency vii, 400
- Cornish, admiral, commands the fleet in the Manilla expedition i, 279
- Cornwallis, lord, arrives in America, ii, 224. his campaign in the Jerseys 256. takes possession of Philadelphia 307. opens the passage of the Delaware 309. defeats the Americans at Camden iii, 42. his acts of severity 43. his unsuccessful campaign in Virginia 93. engages the enemy at Guildford court-house 95. retreats to the Chesapeak 101. is besieged in York-town 103. surrenders to Washington 104. his judicious government in India iv, 11. his spirited conduct to Tippoo 61. is compelled to retreat 63. besieges Seringapatam 67. grants peace to Tippoo 69. his kind reception of his sons as hostages ib. arrives in England, and is created a marquis 72. is appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland, 345. his judicious administration ib. succeeds the marquis Wellesley in India, and reverses his political system vi, 260. his death 261
- Corporation and test acts, unsuccessful motion for their abolition iii, 318. repeal of vii, 162
- Corporations, their reform effected by government vii, 357
- Corresponding societies, their nature and object iv, 251
- Corsicans, their resistance to the oppressions of the Genoese i, 343. their fortresses occupied by French troops 344. their island purchased for the French from the Genoese 456. incorporated into the dominions of Louis XV. ib. are reduced by lord Hood iv, 178
- Cortes, Spanish, their decrees annulled by Ferdinand on his liberation vi, 140. restoration of their power 446
- , Portuguese, their meetings, and the acceptance of the constitution by the king vi, 475

- Corunna, battle of v, 286
 Counsel, bill for allowing felons the benefit of vii, 466
 Covent-garden theatre, its destruction by fire v, 351
 Cracow, the republic of, occupied by Russian, Austrian, and Prussian troops vii, 480
 Cradock, sir John, his active exertions for the independence of Portugal v, 305. endeavors, without success, to secure Cadiz to the Spanish patriots 306. measures adopted by him for the security of Lisbon 307
 Crawford, general, his death and funeral honors at Ciudad Rodrigo vi, 30
 Cricklade, disfranchisement of iii, 136
 Crillon, duc de, his attack on Minorca iii, 86. captures that fortress 122. his unsuccessful attack on Gibraltar, 159
 Crosby, alderman, is committed to the Tower by the house of commons during his mayoralty ii, 42. is released 43
 Crown-point, conquest of, by the Americans ii, 180. abandoned by them 223
 Cuesta, general, his choleric and arbitrary conduct v, 261. his resistance to the orders of the junta 263. is promoted to the command of the Spanish army 302. embarrasses the movements of lord Wellington 313. suffers a shameful repulse 323. his conference with lord Wellington 324. is rescued from a dangerous position 333. resigns his command ib.
 Cumberland, William, duke of, forms a political connexion with the duke of Newcastle i, 264. endeavors to form a new administration, but is unsuccessful 355. his death 358
 ———, duke of, son of George III. wounded in his sleep by his valet v, 371
 Curaçao, island of, places itself under British protection iv, 443. surrenders to commodore Brisbane v, 212
 Curtis, captain, his gallant conduct at the siege of Gibraltar iii, 161. his signal humanity ib.
 Custom-house in London, its conflagration vi, 160

D

- Dalrymple, sir Hew, censured by a court-martial for signing the convention of Cintra v, 257
 Dampierre, general, his death iv, 115
 Dance, captain, extraordinary instance of his gallantry v, 96
 Danton, his ferocious spirit iv, 29. 113. his memorable words previous to his death 130
 Dantzic, its capture by the French v, 200
 Davoust, marshal, defeats the Prussians at Auerstadt v, 177. delivers Paris to the allies vi, 248
 Davy, sir Humphrey, his discovery of the safety-lamp vi, 326. honors conferred on him 327
 Dawson, Daniel, his trial and execution for poisoning race-horses vi, 61
 Deane, Silas, his mission to France ii, 241. obtains a supply of arms and ammunition 242
 Debates in parliament, publication of, established ii, 40

- Deccan, campaign in the vi, 282. is emancipated from the sovereignty of Bajee Row by the British 294
- Declaratory act passed i, 382
- De Grasse, admiral, defeated and captured by Rodney iii, 143
- De Guichen, his defeat by Rodney iii, 35. forms a junction with the Spanish fleet 157. is baffled by lord Howe, ib
- De Launay, governor of the Bastile, murder of iii, 417
- Denmark, its alliance with Russia and Sweden, in opposition to the right of search v, 2. is compelled to renounce the northern confederacy 23. delivers up its fleet to Great Britain 206. her West Indian islands captured by that power 216. makes peace with Great Britain vi, 124. deprived of Norway by the congress of Vienna 192. its treaty with Great Britain for the extinction of the slave trade vii, 443
- Dennewitz, battle of vi, 79
- Derby, popular disturbances at, vi, 340. trial and execution of the rioters ib. disturbances at vii, 293
- Desaix, general, his death on the plain of Marengo iv, 438
- Despard, colonel, his trial and execution v, 65
- D'Estaing, his conquests in the island of Sumatra i, 214. is despatched with a fleet to America ii, 373. his unsuccessful attack on Rhode island 374. is shamefully repulsed by admiral Barrington 378. captures St. Vincent's and Grenada 400. his failure at Tobago 401. his pusillanimous conduct, ib. attempts ineffectually to reduce Savannah 404. returns to France 405
- De Suffrein, his engagements with the British fleet iii, 75
- Detroit, fort, preserved from the ravages of the American Indians i, 336
- Directory in France, establishment of iv, 250. its dissolution by Bonaparte 417
- Dissenters, unsuccessful attempts to relieve them from subscription ii, 50. bill passed for the legalization of the marriages of vii, 463
- Dodd, Dr., convicted of forgery, and executed ii, 277
- Doggerbank, engagement on the, between admiral Parker and the Dutch fleet iii, 87
- Dolben, sir William, his motion for alleviating the sufferings of slaves during the middle passage carried iii, 366
- Domingo, St., its surrender to Toussaint iv, 361. under whom it successfully resists the French arms v, 57
- Dominica, capture of, by the British i, 212. is taken by the French ii, 378
- Donnop, count, gallant death in the attack on fort Miffin ii, 309
- Donoobew, assault of, by the British troops vii, 56
- Douglas, sir James, captures Dominica i, 212. ravages the country of the Cherokees, ib.
- , sir John and lady, their testimony against the princess of Wales v, 151
- Draper, sir William, commands the expedition against Manilla, i, 279
- Dresden, defeat of the allies at vi, 78
- Drury-lane theatre, its destruction by fire v, 351

- Dublin, dangerous insurrection at v, 80. protestant demonstration in vii, 500
- Duckworth, sir J. T., captures three French line-of-battle ships v, 170. forces the passage of the Dardanelles 207. is compelled to retreat 208
- Dugommier, general, commander of the republican forces at the siege of Toulon iv, 137. his powerful recommendation of Napoleon 141. his death 202
- Dumanoir, base and ferocious conduct of, at the battle of Trafalgar v, 136. the ships under his command surrender to sir Richard Strahan 139
- Dumas, M., his conference with the French ambassador at the Hague ii, 240
- Dumouriez, general, minister for foreign affairs to Louis XVI. iv, 15. acquires a high military reputation 30. gains the battle of Jemappe 31. arrests the republican commissioners who summon him to Paris 112. escapes to the Austrian camp, ib.
- Duncan, admiral, defeats the Dutch fleet at the Texel iv, 307. is raised to the peerage 308
- Dundas, Mr., (lord Melville) lord advocate of Scotland, supports the measures of Mr. Pitt iii, 66. appointed treasurer of the navy 208. his firmness 212. forms the plan of the expedition to Egypt v, 30. is impeached by the house of commons for corrupt practices 110. his name erased from the list of privy counsellors 118. his trial and acquittal 164
- Dunkirk ineffectually besieged by the duke of York iv, 118
- Dunmore, lord, expelled from the government of Virginia by popular violence ii, 185. his unsuccessful resistance, ib.
- Dunning, Mr., his motions on the increase of crown influence iii, 15. is defeated 18
- Dupont, general, surrounded by the Andalusian forces v, 225. his surrender at Baylen, ib.
- Durham, lord, remarkable speech of, in favor of the reform bill vii, 307

E.

- East India company, oppressive conduct of their servants i, 415. 424. their remonstrances with the governor and council 426. augment their dividends 444. embarrassed state of their finances ii, 70. interference of government 71. obtain a loan 79. desperate state of their affairs at the commencement of Warren Hastings's administration 279. coalition formed by native powers to expel them from their territories iii, 33. alteration in their state by the bill of Mr. Pitt 251. empowered to make an addition to their stock 288. improvements in their government, ib. declaratory bill 347. extension of their influence and territory under lord Cornwallis iv, 70. advantages derived from the administration of lord Wellesley 398. review of their state from that period to 1823 vi, 260. lord Amherst's administration vii, 31. settlement of their charter, and circumscription of their monopoly 354
- East Retford, borough of, convicted of corruption vii, 141

- Ecclesiastical reforms vii, 464
 Egremont, lord, succeeds Mr. Pitt as foreign secretary i, 231. his death 316
 Egypt, its invasion by the French iv, 347. evacuated by capitulation v, 30. its occupation by general Fraser, who is compelled to retreat 209
 El Arisch, battle of iv, 415
 Eldon, lord, created lord chancellor v, 9. his opposition to the remission of capital punishments vi, 358. his aversion to the policy of Mr. Canning 483. his vehement opposition to all schemes of reform vii, 78. relinquishes office at the commencement of Mr. Canning's administration 124. his opposition to the repeal of the test and corporation acts 163. and to the emancipation of the catholics 195
 Elgin marbles, their purchase by parliament vi, 327
 Elizabeth, empress of Russia, her death i, 264
 Ellenborough, lord chief-justice, admitted to a seat in the cabinet v, 150. his mortification at the trial of Mr. Hone vi, 340. his death 361
 Elley, sir John, his remarkable intrepidity and strength at Waterloo vi, 231
 Elliot, general, (lord Heathfield) his gallant defence of Gibraltar iii, 160. is raised to the peerage, with a pension 162
 Ellis, Mr., seizes the city of Patna i, 416. is made prisoner, ib. is cruelly assassinated with his infant child 419
 Elphinstone, admiral, capture of a Dutch squadron iv, 278
 Ely, riots at vi, 316
 Emmett, leader of the insurrection in Dublin v, 80. his trial and execution 83
 Enghien, duc d', seized in the territory of Baden by the orders of Napoleon v, 96: tried by a military tribunal, and shot, ib.
 English tithes commutation bill passed vii, 463
 Erskine, Mr., his eloquent defence of Horne Tooke, &c. iv, 171. created lord chancellor v, 150
 Eutaw springs, battle of iii, 99
 Evans, colonel, commands the British legion in Spain vii, 449
 Exmouth, lord, his gallant encounter with a French frigate iv, 142. his services in the channel 186. his daring proposal to lord Bridport 325. instance of his generosity 361. quells a mutiny at Bantry-bay 413. his mission to Algiers vi, 318. appointed to the command of an expedition against that city 319. his attack 321. result of the victory 324. honors conferred on him 325. he is raised to the dignity of a viscount, ib.

F.

- Factory bill, its nature vii, 356
 Farringdon Market, opening of vii, 217
 Fayette, marquis de la, embarks in the American cause ii, 243. is wounded in the battle at the Brandywine 306. defeated by the British 368. urges the execution of major André iii, 49. fails in his design of capturing Arnold 92. appointed by the Parisians

- to the command of the national guard 418. endeavours to arrest the progress of the revolution 454. resigns his command of the national guard iv, 14. is compelled to seek safety in the Austrian lines 30. severe remarks on his character by Mr. Burke 160. is released from prison at Olmutz by the intervention of Bonaparte 326
- Ferdinand, prince of Brunswick, defeats the French at Kirchdenkern i, 220
- , VII., prince of the Asturias, his enmity to Godoy v, 219. proclaimed king of Spain 220. is persuaded by Savary to meet Napoleon at Bayonne, *ib.* resigns the crown of Spain into his hands, and is put into confinement 223. is restored to liberty vi, 139. his ingratitude and cruelty 140. re-establishes the inquisition 141. detects a formidable conspiracy 349. his rigorous punishments 399. compelled to recall the Cortes 446. restored to arbitrary power by a French army vii, 3. becomes unpopular with the ultra royalists 91. abolishes the Salique law in Spain 269. his death, and succession of his infant daughter 363
- Ferguson, general, his gallantry at the battle of Vimiero v, 253
- Ferris, captain, his successful manœuvre at the mouth of the Garonne v, 470
- Figueras, capture of, by the republicans iv, 202
- Finland, its occupation by the emperor Alexander v, 233
- Fitzherbert, Mr., signs provisional articles of peace with the American commissioners iii, 162
- Fleurus, battle of iv, 192
- Flushing, its capture by the British v, 346. demolition of its defences and basin 347
- Fontainebleau, preliminaries of peace signed at i, 284. the terms of that treaty 287. opposed by Mr. Pitt 293
- Forster, captain, his gallantry and humanity contrasted with the bad conduct of the Americans ii, 220
- Fox, Mr. Charles, his entrance on public life ii, 6. joins the opposition 109. made secretary of state iii, 128. his junction with lord North 170. introduction of his India bill 202. his contest with Pitt for political power 214. his quarrel with Burke iv, 6. his name erased from the list of privy councillors 373. resumes office after the death of Mr. Pitt v, 150. his death and character 167
- Foy, general, his frightful cruelties vi, 83
- Francis, Mr., wounded in a duel with Warren Hastings ii, 287
- Franklin, Dr., chosen agent for Massachusetts i, 381. forwards the correspondence of Hutchinson and Oliver to his province ii, 95. his dignified demeanor before the privy council 99. his departure from England 163. appointed by congress to superintend the post office 171. suggests the adoption of paper-money *ib.* his letter to M. Dumas 219. his reply to the offers of lord Howe 233. is present at a conference with lord Howe on Staten island 236. his endeavours to procure aid from France 237. he narrowly escapes captivity 244. gives a decisive turn to the counsels of the French court 337. ambassador at the French court 378

- Fraser, major-general Mackenzie, his unsuccessful expedition to Egypt v, 209
- Frazer, general, defeats the American forces under general Thompson ii, 221
- Frederic III., king of Prussia, loses Schweidnitz i, 219. extricated from his difficulties by the death of the czarina 264. his subsidy from Great Britain discontinued 265. concludes the peace of Hubertsburg 295. his aversion to form connexions with Great Britain 398. his resentment against George III. iii, 107. his death 302
- , duke of York, his birth i, 318. is sent to command the British army in Flanders iv, 115. gains possession of Valenciennes 116. is defeated at Hondscote, and compelled to retreat from Dunkirk 118. is defeated at Turcoing, and narrowly escapes captivity 188. returns to England 207. again appointed to the command of an expedition to Holland 410. compelled to re-embark 412. resigns his office of commander-in-chief in consequence of the charges exhibited against him v, 294. his restoration to his former office 425. appointed guardian of the king's person at the demise of the queen vi, 366. his memorable protest against the catholic claims 459. his popularity with the high church party, *ib.* his renewed opposition to the catholic emancipation vii, 75. his death 112
- Friedland, battle of v, 194
- Fullarton, Mr., his duel with the earl of Shelburne iii, 14

G.

- Gage, general, appointed governor of Massachusetts ii, 129. removes the legislature to Salem, *ib.* he fortifies Boston-neck 132. his resistance to the provincial congress 134. sends a fruitless expedition to secure stores at Salem 167. another unsuccessful attempt to destroy the ammunitions, &c., at Concord 168. is superseded by general Howe 180
- Gambier, admiral, obtains possession of the Danish fleet v, 205
- Ganganelli, pope, his death and character ii, 128
- Garrick, David, his retirement from the stage ii, 214
- Gas lights, their introduction in London v, 352
- Gates, general, commands the army destined to arrest the invasion of general Burgoyne ii, 314. surrounds the British at Saratoga 317. accepts their capitulation 318. his signal delicacy and humanity, *ib.* appointed to the command in South Carolina iii, 42. defeated by lord Cornwallis at Camden, *ib.* is superseded by general Greene 43
- Genoa applies to France for assistance against the Corsicans i, 343. conventional treaty between the two countries, *ib.* its surrender to the Austrians iv, 434. re-occupied by the French 439. is captured by lord William Bentinck vi, 142. transferred to the king of Sardinia by the congress of Vienna 159
- George III. succeeds to the throne i, 188. is secretly guided by lord Bute 195. falls from his horse 196. his admirable reprimand of Dr. Wilson 197. recommends the appointment of

judges for life 208. selects the princess Charlotte Sophia for his future queen 234. his nuptials 237. his coronation 238. issues a declaration of war against Spain 256. his patronage of literature and the fine arts 284. erases the name of lord Temple from the list of privy councillors 314. his interview with Mr. Pitt 316. his inflexibility in imposing a direct tax on America 329. his encouragement of domestic manufactures 354. takes disgust at the Grenville administration, and endeavors to form a new one, *ib.* but is compelled to retain his former cabinet 356. his answer to the remonstrance of the livery of London *ii*, 12. is addressed by alderman Beckford 20. his domestic habits and skill in agriculture 49. signs the order for military interference during the riots in London *iii*, 25. exhibits a remarkable instance of dignity and self-command 110. holds a naval levee at the Nore 121. his perplexities at the formation of the coalition ministry 179. his interview with Mr. Adams 194. his disgust at the coalition ministry 200. he dissolves it, and selects Mr. Pitt as prime minister 207. his efficient support of that statesman 216. his dignified determination 224. his answer to the proposed interview between the duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt 235. dissolves the parliament 242. stabbed by Margaret Nicholson 297. his displeasure at the conduct of the heir apparent 301. publishes his letters to Arthur Young 347. his domestic habits and benevolence 348. is seized with illness accompanied with mental derangement 371. his recovery 391. public thanksgiving on that event 392. his admiration of Burke's treatise on the French revolution 456. remarkable instance of his coolness and intrepidity *iv*, 252. his life threatened, and character defamed 260. his life twice in danger during one day 431. his generous protection of the princess of Wales *v*, 151. dismisses the whig administration in consequence of their advocacy of the catholics 190. jubilee at the commencement of the fiftieth year of his reign 350. incurable recurrence of his mental derangement 370. his death and character *vi*, 402

George IV., his birth *i*, 284. separate establishment appointed for him *ii*, 49. his elegant accomplishments, and connexions *iii*, 120. his expensive habits 190. attaches himself to Mr. Fox and the whig party 214. forms an acquaintance with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and involves himself in pecuniary embarrassments 301. his debts liquidated by a parliamentary grant 327. his first speech in parliament, against revolutionary clubs *iv*, 48. his marriage 227. is separated from his wife 259. settlement of his income by parliament *v*, 49. his injudicious application to his father for efficient military rank 79. changes his sentiments with regard to catholic emancipation 109. institutes an investigation of the conduct of the princess 151. relieves her from her pecuniary difficulties 351. he is invested with the regency 376. retains the Perceval administration at the expiration of the restrictions *vi*, 5. his arrangements of military dress 69. his unpopularity at the visit of the allied sovereigns 151. his habits

- of seclusion 314. is assaulted by the mob on his return from the house of lords 329. makes a cession of £50,000 per annum to the public exigences 330. converts Buckingham-house into a palace for the reigning monarch 364. his accession to the throne 403. his dangerous illness 404. prosecution of his queen on a charge of adultery 435. his unpopularity 437. again appears in public 465. celebration of his coronation 468. arrives in Ireland 471. his enthusiastic reception at Dublin 472. visits Hanover 474. his encouragement of literature, *ib.* his visit to Scotland 496. his donation of the library of George III. to the public *vii*, 14. secludes himself from public observation 170. is reluctantly compelled to yield catholic emancipation 180. his final sickness 236. his death and character 237
- Georgia, the assembly of, petitions the British legislature against the stamp act *i*, 371. military operations in *ii*, 403
- Geriah, battle of *i*, 418
- Germaine, (Sackville) lord George, made secretary for the American department *ii*, 195. raised to the peerage *iii*, 124
- Germans, their troops hired by Great Britain to repress the insurrection in America *ii*, 201
- Gerona, its siege and capture by the French *v*, 337
- Ghent, conferences at, respecting the American war *vi*, 161. treaty of peace concluded at 182
- Gibbs, general, his arrival at New Orleans *vi*, 173. his gallantry at the siege of that place 179
- Gibraltar besieged by the Spaniards *ii*, 396. relieved by Rodney *iii*, 33. distress of its garrison 84. furious bombardment of by the Spaniards 85. works of the besiegers destroyed 86. siege and relief of 159
- Girondists, a powerful party in France at the revolution *iv*, 13. its leaders denounced and executed 113
- Glasgow, riots at *vi*, 411. apprehension and punishment of the ringleaders 412
- Glocester, duke of, elected chancellor of Cambridge *v*, 472
- Godoy, Emanuel, chief minister of the king of Spain *v*, 212. his enmity to Ferdinand 219. prevails on Charles IV. to resign his crown to Napoleon 223
- Gold coast, British settlements on, attacked by the Ashantees, who are compelled to retreat *vii*, 27
- Goorkalese defeated by general Ochterlony *vi*, 274. conclude a treaty of peace with the British 278
- Gordon, lord George, his intemperate invective on the king's speech *iii*, 4. his inflammatory language to the populace 22. his violence repressed in the house of commons 23. committed to prison 26. acquitted of high treason 29. his death, *ib.*
- Goree, its capture by the British *iv*, 443
- Graaf, Van, governor of St. Eustatia, his partiality to the American cause *ii*, 276. his recall demanded by sir Joseph Yorke, *ib.*
- Græme, colonel, is deputed by George III. to select a fit consort for him *i*, 234

- Grafton, duke of, is appointed secretary of state i, 357. is placed at the head of the treasury 395. chancellor of the university of Cambridge 481. resigns office ii, 195. his death v, 472
- Graham, general, (lord Lynedoch) defeats the French at Barosa v, 438. storms the fortress of St. Sebastian vi, 107. fails in his attack on Bergen-op-Zoom 127
- Grampound, borough of, its corruption vi, 397. bill for its disfranchisement introduced 413. transfer of its privileges to the county of York 460
- Grand Cairo captured by the French iv, 350
- Grant, colonel, ravages the country of the Cherokees i, 212
- Grattan, Mr., his patriotic efforts iv, 102. his name erased from the list of privy councillors 373. his death vi, 445
- Graves, admiral, dreadful losses sustained by his fleet iii, 157
- Greece, Otho I. assumes the government of vii, 451. affairs of discussed 483
- Greeks, their resistance to Turkish oppression vi, 475. horrible cruelties inflicted on 495. injurious treatment of, at the congress of Verona 500. their cause advocated by Great Britain, France, and Russia vii, 149. choose Capo d'Istria as their first governor 177. narrow boundaries of their territories 203. prince Leopold refuses to become their king 271. are rent asunder by civil commotions 300. appoint Otho of Bavaria their king 358
- Greene, major-general, his able support of Washington ii, 250. is appointed by congress to supersede general Gates iii, 43. urges the execution of major André 48. his masterly retreat from lord Cornwallis 98. succeeds in recovering part of Georgia, and the two Carolinas ib. attacks the British at Eutaw springs 99. rewarded by congress, ib. recovers Charleston 152. honors awarded to him 153
- Grenada, capture of i, 275
- Grenville, Mr. George, his character by Burke i, 181. secretary of state 263. prime minister 309. is urged by George III. to propose a direct tax on America 329. offends the princess dowager 352. opposes the expulsion of Wilkes 493. introduces a bill for regulating the proceedings of the commons on elections ii, 15. which is made permanent 104
- , Mr., (lord Grenville) sent to Paris to open negotiations for peace at the close of the American war iii, 140. carries certain amendments to his father's bill for regulating the trial of controverted elections 361. is advanced to the peerage iv, 54. his correspondence with M. Chauvelin 82. his communications with M. Otto on the subject of a general peace 447. his resignation of office v, 8. assumes the head of the government at the death of Mr. Pitt 149. dissolution of his ministry 190. is installed chancellor of the university of Oxford 415. refuses to join the ministry vi, 10
- Grey, major-general, surprises the Americans under general Wayne ii, 307
- Mr., (earl Grey) his spirited invective against the measures of Mr. Pitt iv, 46. introduces an unsuccessful measure of reform

into the house of commons 97. opposes Mr. Pitt's bill for the prevention of seditious meetings 254. obtains the office of foreign secretary at the death of Mr. Fox v, 169. his refusal to join the ministry of Mr. Perceval vi, 10. opposes the ministry of Mr. Canning vii, 136. supports the duke of Wellington's catholic relief bill 194. expresses his want of confidence in the general measures of his government 242. is appointed first lord of the treasury 257. introduces the reform bill into the house of lords 286. his great popularity on the rejection of that measure 292. again introduces it into the house of peers 304. resigns office 319. is reinstated 325. carries the reform bill 326. retires from office 377

Grimaldi, marquis de, his answer to the American embassy to Spain ii, 245

Gross-Beeren, battle of vi, 79

Guadeloupe, its reduction by the British iv, 176. v, 382. ceded to Sweden vi, 72

Guichen, M. de, joins the Spanish admiral in an attack on Minorca iii, 86

Gustavus III., king of Sweden, procures the restoration of regal power ii, 64

H.

Hales, Dr. Stephen, his death i, 255

Halifax, lord, viceroy of Ireland i, 247. disinterested conduct 248. is at the head of the admiralty 263. secretary of state 309. issues a general warrant, for the apprehension of the authors, printers, and publishers of the North Briton, No. XLV. 312. a verdict of £1000 damages pronounced against him by the court of common pleas for the illegal arrest of Mr. Wilkes 328

Hamburg occupied by the French troops v, 179. declared by Napoleon a part of the French empire 430

Hamilton, lord Archibald, his unsuccessful attempt to reform the representation of Scotland v, 7

Handel, George Frederick, commemoration in honour of iii, 256

Hanover, seized by the French v, 83. transferred to Prussia 143. annexed to the kingdom of Westphalia by Bonaparte 379. resumes its ancient dynasty vi, 80. recognised as a kingdom by the congress of Vienna 159

Harcourt, earl of, appointed viceroy of Ireland ii, 86. his excellent administration, 87

Hardy, Sir Charles, protects the channel against the incursion of the French and Spanish fleets ii, 399

—, Mr. Thomas, arrested on a charge of high treason iv, 156. brought to trial 170. acquitted 171

Harris, general, besieges and captures Seringapatam iv, 386

Harrison, Mr., obtains a reward from parliament for his time-keeper ii, 85

—, a factious demagogue, his trial and conviction vi, 384

Hastings, Warren, is appointed president of Bengal ii, 279. his character, and the nature of his government ib. obtains the col-

- lection and disbursement of the revenue 281. bargains for the subjugation of the Rohillas with the vizir of Oude 284. instances of his shameful rapacity and cruelty *ib.* obtains an ascendancy in the council 287. fights a duel with Mr. Francis *ib.* oppression and imprisonment of Cheyte Sing 288. treatment of the female relatives of that unfortunate prince 290. plunders the mother and widow of Sujah Dowla 291. his extortions to Fyzoolla Khan 292. resigns his office, and embarks for England 294. his conduct incurs the censure of the house of commons *iii*, 139. is impeached by Mr. Burke 290. various charges preferred against him carried in the commons 327. taken into custody, and admitted to bail 336. opening of the trial at Westminster-hall 351. its continuation *iv*, 1. conclusion of the trial 224. rewards conferred on him by the company 225
- Havannah, siege of, *i*, 274. is captured 278
- Haynes, colonel, condemned and executed as a traitor by the British *iii*, 98
- Head, sir Francis, sent out as governor to Upper Canada *vii*, 476
- Helier, St., its capture by the French *iii*, 82. who are compelled to relinquish their conquest 84
- Henley, lord, character of *i*, 182. becomes lord chancellor 208
- Henry, Patrick, his violence in the Virginian assembly *i*, 361
- Hexham, riots at *i*, 209
- Hill, sir Rowland, his remarkable exploit at Arroyo Molino *v*, 467. his brilliant attack on the bridge of Almarez *vi*, 43
- Hislop, sir Thomas, commands the army of the Deccan *vi*, 282
- Hoadley, Dr., his death *i*, 255
- Hoche, general, his successes in La Vendée *iv*, 239. attempts to effect a landing in Ireland, but is compelled to retreat 278
- Hodgson, general, commands the forces at the siege of Belleisle *i*, 212
- Hohenlinden, battle of *iv*, 440
- Holderness, lord, character of *i*. 183. resigns his office of secretary of state 210
- Holkar, reduction of his power by the marquis Wellesley *iv*, 398. reduced by lord Lake to sue for peace *vi*, 262. his ferocious disposition 264. his death 266
- Hondscoote, battle of *iv*, 118
- Hone, Mr., his trial and acquittal for the publication of political parodies on the Litany *vi*, 340
- Hood, lord, his conquest of Corsica *iv*, 178
- Hope, sir John, his capture by the French *vi*, 138
- Horne Tooke, his struggles with Wilkes for notoriety *ii*, 30. establishes the Constitutional Society 32. is summoned by the commons for a libel on the speaker, and discharged 103. publishes a seditious libel 189. his trial and sentence *ib.* apprehended on a charge of high treason *iv*, 156. brought to trial 172. is acquitted 174. retains his seat as member of Old Sarum *v*, 14
- Hornsby, William, esq., incurs the censure of the house of commons *iii*, 139
- Horsley, Dr., supports a bill for the exemption of catholics from the operation of penal laws *iv*, 9

- Horton, Mrs., married to the duke of Cumberland ii, 57
- Hoste, captain, his gallant exploit off the island of Lissa v, 469
- Hotham, admiral, damps the ardour of Nelson in the Mediterranean iv, 235
- Houchard, general, defeats the duke of York, and compels him to raise the siege of Dunkirk iv, 118. is condemned and executed by a revolutionary tribunal 119
- Houses, repeal of the duty on vii, 406
- Howard, Mr., his death, and eulogy by Burke iii, 456
- Howe, general, appointed to serve in America ii, 173. assists in the defeat of the Americans at Bunker's hill 174. endeavours to compass his designs on New York by effecting a landing on Staten island 228. gains possession of New York 248. attacks Washington's lines on White Plains 248. captures fort Washington 249. his skilful movements in the Jerseys 303. defeats Washington in the battle of the Brandywine 305. is recalled 369. inquiry into his conduct 390
- Howe, lord, arrives in America as a mediator, in behalf of the British government ii, 232. his address to Washington, and correspondence with Franklin, *ib.* holds a conference with a deputation from congress 236. his relief of Gibraltar iii, 161. his glorious victory over the French fleet iv, 179. honors awarded to him for his gallantry 182. obtains a redress of grievances for the seamen at Spithead 295
- Hubertsburg, treaty concluded at, between Austria and Prussia i, 295
- Huddy, captain Joshua, captured and executed by the American loyalists iii, 153
- Hughes, sir Edward, storms Trincomalee iii, 75. his conflicts with de Suffrein, *ib.*
- Hull, general, surrenders his force to the British in Canada vi, 18
- Humbert, general, makes a descent on the Irish coast, in support of the rebels iv, 346. defeats general Lake, *ib.* is defeated by lord Cornwallis, *ib.*
- Hungary, queen of, concludes the peace of Hubertsburg i, 295
- Hunt, Mr. Henry, presides at seditious assemblies in Spafelds vi, 316. 332. takes the chair at the Manchester meeting 386. his imprisonment on a charge of high treason *ib.* the charge abandoned, and he enters publicly into Manchester 388. his conviction and sentence for sedition *ib.* elected member for Preston vii, 260
- Huskisson, Mr., his opposition to the depreciation of the currency vi, 484. becomes president of the board of trade 503. is chosen to represent Liverpool at the resignation of Mr. Canning vii, 2. his able advocacy of the principles of free trade 21. 81. 95. his adherence to place 148. his differences with the duke of Wellington 157. his premature resignation of office 166. his melancholy accident and death 261
- Hutchinson, Mr., succeeds sir Francis Bernard in the government of Massachusetts ii, 35. his disputes with the house of representatives 87. his private correspondence with the British govern-

- ment inspected by Dr. Franklin 94. laid before the privy council 96. their report 99. he dissolves the assembly 101. is superseded by general Gage 129
- Hutchinson, general, succeeds to the command of the British army after the death of Abercrombie v, 28. reduces Grand Cairo ib. gains possession of Alexandria, and wrests Egypt from French usurpation 29
- , Mr., his spirited invective against the corruption of the house of commons v, 297
- , captain, assists in the escape of Lavalette vi, 254
- Hyder Ali usurps the government of Mysore i, 509. is defeated by the British 510. appears before Madras, and compels the governor and council to accept terms of peace 512. his disputes with the Madras government iii, 68. his progress in the Carnatic 69. defeats the British 72. reduces Arcot 73. his rage at the repulse of his army near Cuddalore 74. his death 78

I.

- Ibrahim Pacha reduces the city of Navarino vii, 92
- Impey, sir Elijah, chief-justice of Bengal, his recall solicited by the house of commons iii, 139. accused of delinquency 361. the charges abandoned, ib.
- Improvements in London i, 367. vii, 91
- Incendiaries, progress of vii, 249
- Income tax, oppressive nature of iv, 363. raised from six and a half to ten per cent. v, 160. its abolition vi, 157
- India, bill for the regulation of, carried iii, 254. first steam vessel to vii, 89
- Ireland, disturbances in i, 249. suppressed by the military, ib. committee appointed by the house of commons for a revision of her trade-laws ii, 352. opposition of the merchants of Liverpool and Bristol, ib. lord Nugent's motion regarding the trade of, defeated 393. resolution of merchants of, ib. armed associations in that country, and effects of them, ib. effects in favor of free-trade 418. riots in favor of a short money-bill, ib. propositions introduced by lord North for the relief of iii, 6. establishment of its legislative independence 131. its rejection of the plan of commercial intercourse proposed by Mr. Pitt 271. popular meetings, and prosecutions by government 273. popular commotions in iv, 104. an association formed under the title of United Irishmen, for the promotion of civil and religious liberty 103. relaxation of penal enactments against Roman catholics 108. a college established at Maynooth for the education of the catholic priesthood 230. increase of revolutionary principles 231. formation of Orange societies 232. institution of armed yeomanry 233. intercourse established with the French directory ib. origin, progress, and close of the great rebellion 331. its union with Great Britain v, 1. dreadful insurrections in 80. restrictions on public liberty in vi, 158. suspension of *habeas corpus* 478. dreadful famine in, ib. suppression of unlawful associations in vii, 73. disfranchisement of forty shilling freeholders in 199. reflections

- on its disturbed and unsettled state 213. discussion of its affairs 459. 499. condition of 507
- Irish church reform bill passed into a law vii, 346. dissensions among the whig cabinet respecting its appropriation 367. bill for regulating the 435. abandoned 436
- tithes commutation bill rejected 460. again proposed 511.
- national association established 484.
- municipal corporation bill rejected 460. bill again proposed 500.
- poor law proposed 509
- Jackson, general, his gallant defence of New Orleans vi, 178. his disinterested conduct 181
- Jaffa, its capture by Bonaparte iv, 415
- Jamaica, disputes between its executive and legislature vii, 489
- Jasper, sergeant, his gallantry during the attack on Sullivan's island ii, 226
- Java, conquest of, by the British v, 471
- Jemappe, battle of iv, 31
- Jena, battle of v, 177. university of, zeal of its students for the restoration of civil liberty vi, 348
- Jenner, Dr., is rewarded by parliament for the introduction of vaccine inoculation v, 54
- Jersey, its invasion by the French iii, 82. who are compelled to relinquish its possession 84
- , New, campaign in, by Washington ii, 254
- Jervis, captain (earl St. Vincent) his brilliant success against the French iii, 156. rewarded with the order of the Bath 157. gains the battle of Cape St. Vincent iv, 300. raised to the peerage 304
- Jesuits completely suppressed in France i, 344. expelled from Portugal, Spain, &c. 449. the order abolished by Clement XIV. 452. causes of their downfall ib.
- Johnson, sir William, concludes a treaty with the Indian tribes of America i, 338
- , Dr., obtains a pension from George III. i, 284. advocates the expulsion of Wilkes 506. his rebuke of Junius ii, 30. his defence of American taxation 161. observations on his Taxation no Tyranny 213. his death iii, 256
- Joint stock banks, committee of inquiry into the system of, vii, 528
- Jones, Mr. John Gale, committed to Newgate by the house of commons v, 363
- Joseph, king of Portugal, his spirited resistance to the aggressions of France and Spain i, 259
- , archduke, elected king of the Romans i, 342. endeavors to arrest the conquests of Catherine in Turkey, after his accession to the empire ii, 33. his endeavors to open the navigation of the Scheldt iii, 257. failure of his scheme for annexing Bavaria to his dominions 274. his oppressions in the Netherlands 406
- Joubert, general, slain, and his army defeated at Novi iv, 402
- Jourdan, general, defeats the Austrians at Wattignies iv, 121.

- removed from the chief command 121. his gallant conduct at the battle of Fleurus 192. is hard pressed by the Austrians, and agrees to a suspension of hostilities 244. is defeated by the archduke Charles, and compelled to retreat 266. again sustains defeat from the archduke Charles 400. advises Joseph Bonaparte to avoid a battle with the British at Talavera v, 328. sustains a total defeat at Vittoria, where his baton is taken by the British vi, 91.
- Joyce, Rev. Jeremiah, apprehended on a charge of high treason iv, 156. his letter to Horne Tooke *ib.* his acquittal 174
- Junius, his strictures on the conduct of government i, 506. his letter to the king prosecuted ii, 22
- Junot, general, remarkable instance of his gaiety and self-possession iv, 137. his endeavors to reduce the Portuguese to submission v, 244. sustains a signal defeat at Vimiero 251. evacuates Portugal in consequence of the convention of Cintra 256. captures Astorga 393

K

- Katharine Docks, opening of vii, 175
- Keats, captain, his successful manœuvre in an action with the French and Spaniards v, 33
- Kellerman, general, his decisive charge at the battle of Marengo iv, 438
- Kemmendine, capture of the stockades at vii, 45. repulse of the enemy at that place 53
- Kempfenfeldt, admiral, succeeds in capturing twenty transports iii, 119. is lost in the Royal George 158
- Kenyon, lord, created chief justice of the king's bench iii, 370. his panegyric of George III. iv, 260
- Keppel, commodore, accompanies the troops at the siege of Belleisle i, 212. engages with the French off Ushant ii, 380. his dispute with sir Hugh Palliser 381. his declarations in the house of commons 383. is acquitted honorably by a court martial 385. public rejoicings on that event *ib.*
- Kilwarden, lord, his barbarous murder in the streets of Dublin v, 82
- Kingston, duchess of, her trial for bigamy ii, 211
- , in America, reduced to ashes by a division of Clinton's army ii, 316
- Kirchdenkern, battle of i, 220
- Kleber, general, signalises himself at the battle of Fleurus iv, 192. is left by Bonaparte in Egypt with the chief command 445. is assassinated 446
- Knyphausen, general, his skilful defence of New York iii, 44
- Kosciusko is wounded and taken prisoner in defending the liberties of Poland iv, 211
- Kozinsky seizes the person of the king of Poland ii, 45. implores his pardon *ib.*

L

- Labedoyère, general, joins the standard of Bonaparte vi, 198. his trial and execution 252

- Lake, general, commander-in-chief of the forces in Ireland iv, 335. defeats the rebels at Vinegar-hill 338. is defeated by the French 346
- , lord, his judicious advocacy of British interests in India vi, 261. reduces Holkar to sue for peace 262
- Lally, general, unsuccessful in his defence of Pondicherry i, 213. is cruelly imprisoned and executed on his return to France 216
- Lambert, brigadier-general, his gallantry at the siege of Belleisle i, 212
- , Daniel, his enormous size v, 353
- Landrecy taken by the duke of Saxe Cobourg iv, 186
- Langara, admiral, defeated and taken prisoner by Rodney iii, 33
- Laon, battle of iv, 126
- Lasnes, marshal, gets possession of Saragossa v, 303
- Laudohn, general, evacuates Silesia i, 196. captures Schweidnitz 217
- Laurens, Mr., captured by the British, and committed to the Tower iii, 58. is released in exchange for general Burgoyne 119
- Lavallette, general, deserts to Napoleon after his return from Elba vi, 200. his trial and sentence 252. his escape from prison 255
- La Vendée, opposition to the republic in that province iv, 115. conclusion of the war in 238
- Law, Mr., assists Shah Zaddah in the invasion of Bengal i, 214. is taken prisoner by major Carnac, by whom he is generously treated, ib.
- Laybach, congress of vi, 449
- Leather duty, repeal of vii, 226
- Le Clerc, general, his successes in the West Indies v, 56. falls a victim to the climate 57
- Lee, major-general, obtains a command under Washington ii, 179. his judicious remonstrances with Washington 248. is captured by surprise 251. exchanged for general Prescott 305. his disgrace 373
- , Mr., an American agent, procures promises of aid from France ii, 238. his mission to the court of Spain 245
- Leeward Islands, motion respecting, in the house of commons vii, 9
- Legge, Mr., his character i, 180. is dismissed from office 211
- Leipsic, battle of vi, 79
- Lexington, defeat of the king's troops at ii, 168
- Ligny, battle of vi, 212
- Lincoln, general, defeated by colonel Maitland ii, 404. joins with d'Estaing in an ineffectual attempt to reduce Savannah, ib. is captured, with his garrison, at Charleston iii, 40
- Liverpool, lord, becomes premier vi, 11. introduces the bill of pains and penalties against queen Caroline 438. his relinquishment of that measure 443. seized with an incurable paralytic attack vii, 113. his death and character 174
- , and Manchester railway, opening of vii, 261
- Loano, battle of iv, 238
- Loison, general, his cruelties in Portugal v, 245

- London, riots in iii, 22. chapels and dwelling-houses of catholics destroyed 23. prisons, &c. burnt 24. suppression of tumults, *ib.* trials of the rioters 29. tumults at, in consequence of the high price of provisions iv, 446. alarming riots in consequence of the enactment of the corn laws vi, 203. seditious meetings at 315
- Corresponding Society, its nature and objects iv, 43. 155.
- University, opening of vii, 175
- Long Island, gallant expedition of the Americans against ii, 302
- Louis XV. concludes peace with Great Britain i, 306. his arbitrary suppression of parliaments ii, 47. his death 127
- XVI., his marriage with Marie Antoinette ii, 34. succeeds to the crown of France 127. dissensions with his parliaments iii, 412. assembles the states-general 414. compelled to quit Versailles and return to Paris by popular insurrection 425. his flight, and capture at Varennes iv, 12. his palace at the Tuilleries assaulted by an armed rabble 24. his admirable firmness, *ib.* murder of his Swiss guards 28. is deposed 73. executed 86
- XVIII. establishes his abode in Great Britain v, 216. his public entry into London on his restoration vi, 144. arrives in Paris 145. ratifies a treaty with the allies 146. quits the capital at the approach of Napoleon 200. repairs to Ghent, *ib.* returns to Paris with the allies 249. his death vii, 30
- Philippe raised to the French throne vii, 246
- Louisa, princess, sister of George III., her death i, 481
- Louisiana sold to the United States v, 84. unfortunate expedition against, by the British vi, 167
- Lowe, sir Hudson, governor of St. Helena, his disputes with Bonaparte vi, 257
- Luddites, their dangerous combinations v, 428
- Luneville, peace of iv, 441
- Luttrell, colonel, offers himself a candidate for Middlesex in opposition to Wilkes i, 495. is pronounced duly elected by the commons 496
- Lyons, insurrections at, in favor of the Girondists iv, 127. siege of that city by the republicans 132. is compelled to capitulate 133. horrible executions at 134. riots at vii, 299

M.

- Macarthy, sir Charles, defeated and slain by the Ashantees vii, 27
- Macartney, lord, governor of Madras, forms a successful plan for the reduction of the Dutch settlements iii, 75
- Macdonald, general, sustains a signal defeat by Suwarroff iv, 402. his army almost annihilated by Blucher vi, 78. his honorable fidelity to Napoleon 134. is deserted by his army on the approach of Bonaparte 200. he accompanies Louis XVIII. to Ghent, *ib.* is raised by him to the command of the army 252
- Mack, general, appointed to the command of the Neapolitan forces iv, 368. his imbecility and cowardice 369. surrenders Ulm to Napoleon v, 128
- Mackinnon, general, his death and funeral honors at Ciudad Rodrigo vi, 32

- Mackintosh, sir James, opposes the political axioms of Burke in his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* iii, 431. his endeavors to effect a reformation in the criminal code vi, 367. 414. vii, 6
- Macrea, Miss, her melancholy fate ii, 342
- Madeira, island of, secured by the British v, 25
- Madras, state of, previous to the government of lord Pigot ii, 295. its distress from the ravages of Hyder Ali iii, 77
- Madrid, insurrections at i, 406. v, 221. taken possession of by lord Wellington vi, 51. re-occupied by Joseph Bonaparte 54. disturbance at vii, 489
- Maha Bandoola, his invasion of Arracan, and subsequent retreat vii, 49. assumes the command of the Burmese army 50. he attacks the British at Kemmendine 53. his death 57
- Mahomet Ali, consolidates his power in the Syriac provinces vii, 452
- Maitland, colonel, defeats the American general Lincoln ii, 404
- Malcolm, sir John, sent as envoy to the shah of Persia vi, 269. he returns to Calcutta, ib. his pursuit of Cheetoo 288. his active exertions and conciliatory conduct in central India 290. concludes a treaty with Bajee Row 294
- Malmesbury, lord, his unsuccessful mission to reconcile differences with the French iv, 285. his return to England 286. again fails in his pacific negotiations with the French republic 314
- Malta, its capture by the French iv, 349. its conquest by the British 444
- Man, regalities in the Isle of, purchased of the duke of Athol i, 350
- Manchester, disturbances at vi, 338. 360. meeting at, to petition for parliamentary reform 385. its dispersion by the yeomanry, and tragical result 386. opening of the railway between that town and Liverpool vii, 261
- Manheim taken by the French republicans iv, 243. recaptured by the Austrians 244. taken again by the French 400
- Manilla taken by the British i, 279
- Mansfield, lord, confirms the judgment respecting the illegality of general warrants i, 323. his dignified and upright conduct 479. opposes lord Chatham ii, 3. his judgment on libels 23. destruction of his residence, &c. by the rioters iii, 24. his opinion on the legality of military interference 27. retires from the bench 370
- Mantua, surrender of, to the French iv, 308
- Marat, his violence and cruelty iv, 113. assassinated by Charlotte Corday 114
- Marengo, battle of iv, 437
- Maria, Donna de Gloria, refuses to marry Don Miguel vii, 30. arrives in Europe 169. proclaimed in Lisbon 360
- Louisa becomes the wife of Napoleon v, 377. gives birth to a son 430
- Marie Antoinette, her marriage with Louis XVI. ii, 34. her active interference in favor of America 336. endeavors to re-establish

- the authority of the king iii, 423. narrowly escapes assassination 425. her heroism iv, 28. trial and execution 129
- Marmont, marshal, supersedes Massena in his command in Spain v, 451. makes an unsuccessful attack on the British position at El Bodon 462. his communications with Soult intercepted vi, 44. his signal defeat at Salamanca 46
- Marr, Mr., atrocious murder of himself and family v, 428
- Martinique, conquest of i, 275. again surrendered to the British iv, 176
- Massachusetts, hostilities between the legislative assembly of, and governor Bernard i, 386. by whom it is prorogued 463. renewed disputes 464. the assembly dissolved 465. determined opposition of the new assembly 502. their resistance to governor Hutchinson ii, 90. their publication of the correspondence of Hutchinson and Oliver, with their petition to the king 94. their petition dismissed 102. a bill enacted for the better regulation of their government 116. another for the impartial administration of justice ib. their spirited conduct 130. they resist the fortification of Boston-neck 133. resolve themselves into a provincial congress 134. remonstrate with general Gage ib.
- Massena, general, his successes in Genoa iv, 199. surprises and defeats the Austrians at Loano 237. checks Suwarroff in Switzerland, and compels him to retreat 403. is driven by the Austrians within the ramparts of Genoa 433. is compelled to surrender that city to the Austrians, 434. sent to command the French army in Portugal v, 394. gains possession of Ciudad Rodrigo 395. captures Almeida 397. repelled in an attempt to force the British lines at Busacos 401. blockades the defences of Torres Vedras 406. compelled to retreat 408. quits Santarem 442. is opposed by Ney, whom he deprives of his command 445. is driven across the Portuguese frontier 447. defeated at Fuentes Onoro 510. resigns his command to Marmont 514
- Matthews, general, captures the city of Bednore iii, 79. is compelled to surrender to Tippoo Saib ib.
- Maurepas, M., favorable to the cause of the Americans ii, 241
- Mauritius, dissensions in the vii, 471
- Mayence, surrender of, to the Prussians iv, 116
- Maynooth college, establishment of iv, 230
- Meigs, colonel, his exploits in Long Island rewarded by congress ii, 303
- Melas, marshal, assumes the command of the Austrian forces in Italy iv, 433. sustains a signal defeat at Marengo 437
- Melbourne, lord, succeeds earl Grey as premier vii, 377. his dismissal from office 412. his re-appointment 427
- Menai Strait suspension bridge, commencement of vi, 401. its completion and opening vii, 112
- Menou, general, commander of the French forces in Egypt at the death of Kleber iv, 446. surrenders Alexandria to the British v, 29
- Merchant marine, condition of vii, 454
- Merino sheep, their first introduction into England v, 353

- Methuen treaty, termination of vii, 449
- Middlesex election, resolutions regarding, expunged from the journals of the house of commons iii, 135
- Mifflin, fort, unsuccessful attack on by the British ii, 309
- Miguel, Don, his attempt to dethrone his father vii, 30. visits England *ib.* assumes the government of Portugal, and commits the most outrageous excesses 169. 205. attempts the life of his sister 207. his troops defeated at Terceira *ib.* his revolting cruelties 269. his fleet captured 360
- Military punishment, severity of ii, 102
- Minorca relieved by Rodney iii, 35. is compelled at length to surrender to the French 122. retaken by the British iv, 361
- Minto, lord, succeeds sir George Barlow in the government of India iv, 264. his successful expedition against Java 268. resigns his government 271
- Mir Cossim becomes nabob of Bengal on the deposition of his father-in-law i, 410. resists the illegal traffic of the company's servants 412. is deposed 417. takes refuge with Sujah Dowla 420
- Mir Jaffier, nabob of Bengal, abdicates the sovereignty i, 410. is reinstated 417. oppressive extortions on, by the company's servants 424. his death 425
- Mirabeau, his exertions to promote a moderate reform in the French government iii, 454. his death iv, 11
- Miranda surrendered to the Spaniards i, 272
- Missolonghi invested by the Turks vii, 92. its capture 111
- Monckton, colonel, remarkable attachment of his soldiers towards ii, 372
- Moncorvo surrendered to the Spaniards i, 272
- Monge, M., his bombastic tirade against the British government iv, 85
- Monghir, capture of, by the British i, 419
- Monte Video, unsuccessful attack on v, 172. its capture and relinquishment by the British 211
- Montgomery, general, his conquest of St. John's and Montreal ii, 182. joins with Arnold in an unsuccessful attack on Quebec 183. is killed 184
- Montgomery-fort, captured by sir Henry Clinton ii, 315
- Montreal, conquest of, by the Americans ii, 182. is abandoned by the enemy 222
- Moore, captain, his gallant exploit near Cadiz v, 100
- , sir John, assumes the command of the British army in Portugal v, 271. advances into Spain 273. his great difficulties 274. determines to retreat into Portugal 276. wretched situation of the British army 281. he repels the attack of marshal Soult at Lugo 283. is killed at the moment of victory at Corunna 287
- Morea, Turkish fortresses in, reduced by the French vii, 177
- Moreau, general, penetrates into Bavaria iv, 267. retreats through the Black Forest 268. defeated by the archduke Charles 269. recrosses the Rhine *ib.* assumes the command of the army of Italy 402. defeats the Austrian at Hohenlinden 440. engages

- in a plot to subvert the consular government v, 95. is allowed to retire to the United States *ib.*
- Moreno, Don Juan de, commands the allied fleet of France and Spain in the attack of Gibraltar *iii*, 159
- Mortier, general, takes possession of Hanover v, 83
- Moscow, pestilence at *ii*, 44. its destruction by the Russians to ensure the downfall of Napoleon *vi*, 25
- Moultrie, colonel, his gallant defence of Sullivan's island *ii*, 225
- Mugh, their persecution by the Burmese *vii*, 35. they find protection within the British frontier, *ib.* their unconditional surrender demanded by the Burmese 37. their predatory and restless habits 39. their levy and artillery dispersed by the Burmese chief 49
- Muir, Mr., is transported to Botany-bay for fourteen years on a charge of sedition *iv*, 152
- Municipal reform bill, proposed *vii*, 431. passed into a law 435. amendment of 465
- Munro, major Hector, assumes the command of the British army in India *i*, 421. subdues the rebellious spirit of his army 422. defeats the enemy at Buxar *ib.* makes an unsuccessful attempt on Chandageer, 423. reduces Negapatam *iii*, 75
- Murat, his military executions at Madrid v, 222. created king of Naples, *ib.* invades Sicily without success 381. is left in the supreme command of the French forces *vi*, 25. flies to Naples, *ib.* joins the allies 124. attacks the Austrians, and is routed 202. is taken prisoner, tried, and executed 255. his character *ib.*
- Murray, general, his spirited conduct during the riots of 1780 *iii*, 23
- , sir John, invests Tarragona *vi*, 85. retreat from thence *ib.*
- Murviedro taken by Suchet v, 468

N.

- Nagle, captain, his gallant engagement with the French *iv*, 177
- Najim u Dowla appointed nabob of Bengal on the death of Mir Jaffier *i*, 425. presents extorted by the company's servants on this occasion *ib.* his death 439
- Napier, admiral, captures the fleet of Don Miguel *vii*, 360
- Naples, its occupation by the forces of the French republic *iv*, 369. transferred by Napoleon to his brother Joseph v, 144. assigned to Murat by Bonaparte 223. invaded by the British without success 344. its struggles for liberty suppressed by the holy alliance *vi*, 449
- Napper Tandy, indicted on the charge of high treason *iv*, 347. suffered to quit the kingdom *ib.*
- Navarino, its siege and capture by Ibrahim Pacha *vii*, 92. battle of 151
- Neckar, M., endeavors to restore the exhausted finances of France *iii*, 121. is compelled to retire from office, 122. recalled 413. flies from France 453
- Negapatam captured *iii*, 75

- Nelson, lord, loses an eye at the siege of Calvi iv, 178. magnanimity of his conduct, *ib.* is the chief cause of the success of admiral Hotham in the Mediterranean 235. superintends the evacuation of Porto Ferrajo, and the island of Capraia 277. invested with the order of the Bath for his gallant conduct at Cape St. Vincent 304. loses an arm at the unsuccessful siege of Teneriffe 305. is appointed to pursue the French fleet 350. arrives at Alexandria 351. battle of the Nile 353. honors paid him on that occasion 358. defends Sicily from the inroads of the French republic 369. annuls the treaty made with the Neapolitan revolutionists, and sanctions the execution of prince Caraccioli 407. fights the battle of Copenhagen, and obtains a splendid victory in violation of the orders of sir Hyde Parker v. 18. arranges an armistice with the crown prince of Denmark 23. is raised to the rank of viscount, *ib.* attacks the French flotilla at Boulogne 31. pursues the French fleet without success 122. appointed to the command of the fleet 127. his arrival at Cadiz 129. his manœuvres and instructions to his officers 130. his preparations for battle *ib.* engages the enemy at Trafalgar 132. his death at the moment of victory 135. honors paid to his memory 138
- Netherlands, their resistance to the oppressions of the emperor Joseph iii, 407. inhumanity of the French towards iv, 195
- Newcastle, (Pelham) duke of, his character, i, 178. resigns office 262. his disinterested conduct, *ib.* forms a political connexion with the duke of Cumberland 264. is appointed to the office of privy seal 357. his death 481
- , duke of, his opinion of Mr. Canning vii, 135. ejection of his tenantry at Newark 228. his castle at Nottingham burnt by the mob 293
- New England states, their strong remonstrances against colonial taxation i, 331. take the lead in their opposition to the mother country ii, 88. bill for the restriction of their commerce 151
- New Jersey, operations of the British at ii, 376
- New London Bridge, its commencement vii, 88. is opened by William IV. 284
- New Orleans, its unsuccessful siege by the British vi, 178
- New Post Office, opening of vii, 217. its improved system, *ib.*
- New South Wales, its rapid and extensive progress in cultivation vii, 29. political disorganization of 541
- Newspapers, motion for the repeal of the stamp duties on, resisted vii, 439. stamp duty on, reduced 470
- New York, congress at i, 362. alarming riots at 390. the legislative power of their assembly suspended 446. its assembly again permitted to meet 467. expedition against by the British ii, 228. arrival of Washington, *ib.* captured by the British 248. operations of the British army at 375
- New Zealanders, their increasing civilisation vii, 29
- Ney, marshal, appointed by Napoleon to the command of the French expedition against England v, 122. refuses to concur with Soult in the invasion of Portugal 333. invests Ciudad Rodrigo 394. superseded by Massena 395. commands the rear guard in its

- retreat from Portugal 443. deprived of his command by Massena 445. his gallant conduct at Borodino vi, 25. is totally routed at Dennewitz by Bulow 79. sends in his adhesion to the provisional government after the capture of Paris 134. obtains the command of the army from Louis XVIII. 199. joins Napoleon, *ib.* is repulsed by the British at Quatre Bras 216. his courage signalised at Waterloo 243. his arrest and execution 253
- Niagara successfully defended against the American Indians i, 338
- Nicholas, emperor of Russia, his accession to the throne vii, 90. assists the Greeks 150. proclaims war against Turkey 168. grants peace to that power 203. his subjugation of Poland 268. 300
- Nicholson, Margaret, her attempt on the life of George III. iii, 297
- Nimeguen, surrender of, to the French iv, 206
- Nootka Sound seized by the Spaniards from the English iii, 442. restored 446
- Nore, dangerous mutiny of seamen at iv, 296. suppressed, and the ringleaders punished 298
- North, lord, becomes chancellor of the exchequer i, 446. is made premier ii, 9. promotes the repeal of the American revenue act 16. elected chancellor of the university of Oxford 85. determines on the adoption of coercive measures in America 107. introduces a pacific motion 152. his conciliatory bills 344. his propositions for the relief of Ireland iii, 6. his disagreement with sir Fletcher Norton 14. his facetious sarcasm on the incompetency of the commanders in America 105. resigns office 127. forms a coalition with Mr. Fox 170. his defence of his conduct 177
- North Briton, a periodical, its seditious and immoral tendency i, 310. contains an atrocious libel on George III. 312. which is burnt publicly by order of the commons 322
- Northern confederacy, origin of v, 2
- North-west passage, voyage of captain Parry in search of vi, 445
- Norton, sir Fletcher, elected speaker of the house of commons ii, 9. his spirited address to George III. 271. receives a vote of approbation from the house 272. his disagreement with lord North iii, 14. joins the opposition 15. loses his re-election to the chair 55. raised to the peerage 129
- Norway, its cession to Sweden by the congress of Vienna i, 192
- Nottingham, riots at vii, 293
- Novi, battle of iv, 402
- Nowell, Dr., his sermon before the house of commons canvassed ii, 59
- Nullum tempus* bill i, 457. ecclesiastical *nullum tempus* bill ii, 56

O.

- Ochterlony, general, restores the lustre of the British arms in the Nepaulese war vi, 274
- O'Connell, Mr., his extensive influence over the catholic population of Ireland vii, 24. is elected member for the county of Clare 170. re-elected after the passing of the catholic relief bill 199. is

- apprehended, and pleads guilty 297. his violent philippics against earl Grey's administration 340. his unsuccessful endeavors to repeal the union 364. procures the resignation of earl Grey 376. his aid to the administration of lord Melbourne 429. his mission to the north of England and Scotland 443. his letter to the people of England 483
- Olivenza taken by marshal Soult v, 433
- Oliver, alderman, committed to the Tower by the house of commons ii, 43. his release 44.
- , lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts, his correspondence with the British ministry published ii, 94. laid before the privy council 96. their report 99
- Omoa captured by the British ii, 412
- Oncidas, mission of, to the provincial assembly ii, 218
- Oporto, its assault and capture by marshal Soult v, 309. is recovered by the English 314. captured by Don Pedro vii, 334. its siege raised 360
- Orange lodges, their zeal and violence for the promotion of protestant ascendancy vii, 172. engage the attention of parliament 437. discouragement of, by William IV. 459
- Orders of council issued by the British government against the Berlin and Milan decrees v, 204. additional restrictions 213
- Orthes, battle of vi, 130
- Ostend, unsuccessful attempt against by the British iv, 360
- Oswego, fort of, its reduction by the British vi, 162
- Otho, prince of Bavaria, created king of Greece vii, 358
- Otto, M., his negotiations with the British government on the subject of peace iv, 447
- Oudinot, marshal, his total defeat at Gross-Beeren vi, 79
- Oxford university, instance of its munificence iv, 55. its magnificent reception of the allied sovereigns vi, 151. rejects Mr. Peel as their representative on account of his conversion to the cause of catholic emancipation vii, 181. visited by William IV. and his queen 453
- , corruption of the mayor and corporation of i, 459. who are reprimanded by the speaker, ib.

P.

- Paget, sir Edward, suppresses the mutiny of his troops in the Burmese war vii, 50
- Paine, Thomas, contributes materially to the establishment of American independence by the publication of his *Common Sense* ii, 230. publishes his *Rights of Man* iii, 455
- Pakenham, sir Edward, his signal courage at the battle of Salamanca vi, 47. arrives at New Orleans 173. his gallant death at the siege of that place 179
- Palliser, sir Hugh, his disputes with admiral Keppel ii, 331. his defence in the house of commons 384. is acquitted by a court-martial 386
- Palmer, Rev. Mr., transported to Botany-bay for fourteen years on a charge of sedition iv, 152

- Pampeluna surrendered to the Spaniards vi, 111
- Paoli, general, his brave defence of Corsica i, 343. he remonstrates with the French monarch, *ib.* makes an unsuccessful attempt to procure the mediation of England and Austria 344
- Parga, fortress of, its delivery into the hands of the Turks vi, 397. embarkation of its inhabitants 398
- Paris, its capture by the allies vi, 133. occupied by Wellington and Blucher 248. is stripped of its trophies of victory 250
- Parker, sir Peter, assists general Clinton in the attack on Sullivan's island ii, 224
- , sir Hyde, admiral, engages the Dutch fleet off the Dogger-bank iii, 87. resigns his command in disgust 88. his orders disobeyed by Nelson at the battle of Copenhagen v, 20
- , Richard, chosen president of the committee of delegates by the mutinous seamen at the Nore iv, 296. tried by a court-martial, and executed 298
- Parry, captain, his voyage in search of a north-west passage vi, 445
- Patans and Pindaries, their extensive system of plunder vi, 265. their dispersion by the marquis of Hastings 290
- Patna, conquest of, by Mr. Ellis i, 416. is recaptured by the Indian governor, *ib.* retaken by major Adams 420
- Paul, the Russian emperor, concludes a treaty with Great Britain iv, 364. eulogy on his character by Mr. Pitt 365. withdraws from the confederacy 405. his inveterate hostility to Great Britain v, 3. is assassinated by his nobles, and succeeded by his son Alexander 24
- Jones, commander of an American privateer, his ravages at Whitehaven and Kirkcudbright ii, 386. his engagement with captain Pierson 413. presented with the order of merit by Louis XVI., and protected by the Dutch 414
- Paulus Hook, British garrison surprised at ii, 409
- Pedro, Don, obtains the sovereignty of Brazil vii, 91, his tyrannical and imprudent conduct, *ib.* nominates Don Miguel regent of Portugal 168. despatches his daughter to Europe 169. refuses to compromise her claims 210. prepares for a descent on Portugal 299. takes possession of Oporto 334. his decided successes 360
- Peel, sir Robert, his first speech in parliament v, 356. his bill for the resumption of cash payments vi, 370. he is appointed home secretary 480. his opposition to the claims of the catholics 481. and to the depreciation of the currency 485. his exertions for the reform of the criminal code vii, 7. 98. declines office under Mr. Canning's government 124. his opposition to that minister 139. his improvements of the criminal code 142. joins the Wellington administration 148. advocates the repeal of the test and corporation acts 163. becomes the advocate of catholic claims, and resigns the representation of Oxford 181. carries the bill in favor of catholic emancipation through the house of commons 198. establishes a metropolitan police 218. defends the duke of Newcastle 229. advocates the diminution of capital punishments 234. opposes the reform bill 281. succeeds lord Melbourne as premier

413. resigns office 426. elected lord rector of the university of Glasgow 495. supports the municipal reform bill 431. supports the Irish poor law 510
- Peine forte et dure* abolished ii, 62
- Peltier, M., convicted of a libel on Bonaparte v, 58
- Penobscot, American disaster at ii, 409
- Penryn, borough of, convicted of corruption vii, 141
- Perceval, Mr., the legal adviser of the princess of Wales v, 152. chancellor of the exchequer 190. created first lord of the treasury 350. assassinated in the house of commons vi, 8. posthumous honors to his memory, and pensions to his family 9
- Perry, commodore, his defeat and capture of the British squadron under captain Barclay vi, 118
- Persia, civil war in, vii, 452
- Perthshire, riots in iv, 318
- Peter III. of Russia, concludes a peace and treaty of alliance with Frederic III. of Prussia i, 265. his death 267
- Petty, lord Henry (marquis of Lansdowne) becomes chancellor of the exchequer v, 150. joins the ministry of Mr. Canning vii, 138. accepts office in the Grey administration 258
- Philadelphia, general congress assembled at ii, 135. its acts enumerated 136. it is broken up, after appointing another meeting the following year 138. it again assembles 171. occupied by the British 307. licentious conduct of the soldiery there 366. evacuated by the British 371
- Phillipon, his gallant defence of Badajos vi, 37
- Pichegru, general, promoted to the chief command of the republican forces iv, 121. sustains a defeat near Tournay 187. his rapid conquests 205. takes possession of Mannheim 243. engages in a plot to subvert the consular government v, 95. strangles himself in prison ib.
- Picton, sir Thomas, his gallantry at the attack on El Bodon v, 464. storms the breaches at Ciudad Rodrigo vi, 30. is mainly instrumental to the capture of Badajos 38. remarkable display of his chivalrous courage at the battle of Vittoria 92. decides the victory at Orthes 130. his zealous co-operation at the battle of Toulouse 137. receives the thanks of the house of commons for the seventh time 150. is severely wounded at Quatre Bras 218. his gallant death at Waterloo 229
- Pierson, captain, his engagement with Paul Jones ii, 413
- , major, gallant defence of St. Helier iii, 83. his death, 84
- Pigot, lord, appointed governor of Madras ii, 296. is opposed by a majority in the council 297. is put under arrest 298. he and the council ordered home 299. his death ib. judgment of the court of king's bench, 300
- Pitt, fort, is bravely defended from the American Indians by colonel Bouquet i, 336
- , Mr. William, son of the earl of Chatham, his first speech in parliament iii, 61. his motion in favor of parliamentary reform 137. becomes chancellor of the exchequer, and leader of the house of commons 148. declines his majesty's solicitations for his continuance in office 179. his prudent and honorable con-

- duct 181. becomes prime minister at the dissolution of the coalition ministry 207. his great difficulties 209. his disinterestedness 213. his Indian bill rejected by the commons 221. is presented with the freedom of the city of London 228. his triumph over his opponents 240. procures the dissolution of parliament 242. returns highly favorable to him 243. his India bill passed into a law 255. is defeated in a new measure of parliamentary reform 261. his plan for adjusting the commercial intercourse between England and Ireland rejected by the Irish legislature 271. his establishment of an efficient sinking-fund passed into a law 286. carries his grand scheme of financial reform 314. interferes in favor of the stadtholder 339. his plan for liquidating the claims of the American loyalists 362. his great popularity at the commencement of the French revolution 428. curious avowal of his change of opinion *iv*, 44. created warden of the cinque ports 54. his examination at the Old Bailey on the trial of Horne Tooke 174. his bill to prevent seditious meetings 253. his great popularity 261. fights a duel with Mr. Tierney 330. resigns office *v*, 8. is again placed at the head of administration 92. attempts to form a new coalition 104. his reconciliation with Mr. Addington 105. his opinion on the subject of catholic disabilities 107. delivers his last speech in parliament 117. succeeds in forming a new coalition 118. decline of his health 119. his death 146. honors paid to his memory *ib*. review of his policy and character 147
- Pius VI. pope, carried into exile by the French *iv*, 367
- VII. excommunicates Napoleon, and is imprisoned by him at Fontainebleau *v*, 341. his restoration to liberty *vi*, 141
- Plunkett, Mr., (lord Plunkett) his powerful advocacy of the catholic claims *vii*, 117. created lord chancellor of Ireland 258
- Plymley, Peter, his severe strictures on Mr. Canning *v*, 229
- Plymouth, construction of a breakwater at *vi*, 60
- Pocock, admiral, in conjunction with lord Albemarle, captures the Havannah *i*, 278
- Poland, dissensions in *i*, 407. her first partition *ii*, 65. her second partition *iv*, 211. ceases to be a kingdom, *ib*. expulsion of the grand duke Constantine from its territories *vii*, 267. its complete subjugation by the emperor Nicholas 268. 300. treated as a Russian province 451
- Police, metropolitan, establishment of *vii*, 218
- Polignac, M., becomes prime minister of France *vii*, 205. his unpopularity *ib*. his downfall 246
- Political unions, their dangerous power *vii*, 293. 315
- Pombal, marquis, his extensive reforms in Portugal *i*, 300
- Pompadour, madame, death of *i*, 344. cause of the suppression of the jesuits 454
- Pondicherry, siege and capture of *i*, 213. the town and fortifications levelled with the ground, *ib*.
- Poniatowski, count, elected king of Poland *i*, 342
- Ponsonby, sir William, his gallant charge, and glorious death at Waterloo *vi*, 231
- Poor laws, bill for their amendment, its introduction *vii*, 393.

- passed into a law 398. operation of 519. committee appointed to inquire into the relief of the poor under the operation of 521
- Popham, sir Home, obtains possession of the Cape of Good Hope v. 171. captures Buenos Ayres 172. makes an unsuccessful attack on Monte Video *ib.* is recalled, and censured by a court-martial *ib.*
- Portland, duke of, at the head of the coalition ministry *iii.*, 180
- Portsmouth, conflagration of the royal dock-yard at *ii.*, 263
- Portugal, its spirited resistance to the united French and Spanish forces *i.*, 271. v. 24. at length compelled to yield *ib.* is overrun by the French troops 212. is relinquished by the royal family, who take refuge in the Brazils, 213. the inhabitants rise against the French 226. organised by marshal Beresford to a successful resistance of their persecutors 308. sinks into the ranks of a tributary state to the Brazils *vi.*, 349. suppression of its struggles for liberty 448. meeting of its Cortes 475. arrival of the king from Brazil, and his acceptance of the constitution *ib.* his restoration to arbitrary power *vii.*, 3. unsuccessful attempts of Don Miguel to usurp the crown 30. obtains a constitutional government 104. obtains speedy and efficient support from Great Britain, against the menaces of France and Spain 110. is rent asunder by the factions of Don Pedro and Miguel 168. Donna Maria proclaimed queen of 360. her marriage *vii.*, 449. its animosity against Great Britain 543
- Pownal, governor, his prudent advice to government in the American contest *i.*, 497. proposes the repeal of all duties *ii.*, 17. his humane proposal 342
- Prescot, general, surprised by the Americans, and exchanged for general Lee *ii.*, 305
- Prevost, general, his conquest in East Florida *ii.*, 379. fails in his endeavors to surprise Charleston 403. his gallant defence of Savannah 404
- , sir George, his unsuccessful attempt to reduce Sacket's harbor *vi.*, 116. is accused of neglect of duty and misconduct 164
- Price, Dr., his work on Civil Liberty *ii.*, 213
- Priestley, Dr., his answer to Mr. Burke *iv.*, 16. destruction of his house and property at Birmingham by the rabble 18
- Procter, colonel, his contests with the Americans on the Detroit frontier *vi.*, 115. is compelled to retreat 119
- Prome, its occupation by the British *vii.*, 58. defeat of the Burmese at 61
- Prussia, review of her condition at the close of the septennial war *i.*, 296. her military conquests for the restoration of the stadtholder *iii.*, 339. forms a treaty of alliance with Great Britain and Holland 369. commences war with the French republic *iv.*, 26. withdraws from the coalition 185. joins the Russians in the investment of Warsaw 211. makes peace with the French republic 218. its selfish policy *v.*, 118. accepts the electorate of Hanover from Napoleon 143. proclaims war against France 175. makes peace with France, with the loss of half her monarchy 201. forms alliances with England and Russia against France *vi.*,

75. her aggrandisement by the congress of Vienna 188. her severe restrictions on the liberty of the press 349. her design for uniting the Germanic states in one body vii, 450. accomplishes it 490
- Putnam, general, his patriotic courage ii, 170. his humanity at the battle of Bunker's-hill 175. is deceived by the movements of Clinton 316

Q.

- Quadripartite treaty, nature of vii, 410
- Quatre Bras, battle of vi, 216
- Quesnoy, capture of, by the Austrians, iv, 117. retaken by the French 203

R.

- Raikes, Mr., the originator of Sunday schools, is patronised by queen Charlotte iii, 53
- Rangoon, its capture by the British vii, 43
- Rawdon, lord (marquis of Hastings), his gallantry at the battle of Camden iii, 42. attacks the Americans at Hobkirk's-hill 97. quits the army 98. succeeds lord Minto as governor-general of India vi, 271. declares war against the Nepaulese 272. his military operations ib. his dispersion of the Patans and Pindaries 290. reduces the peishwah to submission 294. establishes the supremacy of Great Britain 295. his beneficent domestic administration ib. returns to England 297
- Reform bill, its introduction into the house of commons vii, 274. its rejection by the lords 292. disappointment of the country at that event ib. is again introduced 301. passed into a law 326. amendment of 437
- Reformers, meetings of, in different parts of the country vii, 495
- Regnier, general, is defeated by the British at Maida v, 174
- Revenue-officers excluded from voting in parliamentary elections iii, 135
- Rhode island, unsuccessful attack on, by the Americans and French ii, 374. evacuated by the British 410
- Riard, his execution at Lyons iv, 127
- Richardson, Mr. Samuel, his death i, 255
- Robespierre, his violence and cruelty towards the Girondists iv, 113. his miserable death 197
- Robinson, Mr., (earl of Ripon) his introduction of a prohibitory duty on foreign grain vi, 203. his unpopularity 204. becomes chancellor of the exchequer 503. raised to the peerage vii, 126. becomes premier on the death of Mr. Canning 146. resigns office 147. joins the administration of earl Grey 258. resigns office 368
- Rochambeau, count de, arrives in America with a reinforcement from the French court iii, 44
- Rockingham, marquis of, becomes prime minister i, 357. his ministry dissolved 394. is again placed at the head of the treasury iii, 128. his death 146
- Rodney, admiral, makes a conquest of the French Caribbee isles i,

275. his character and services ii, 363. his answer to the proposals of Louis XVI. 365. is appointed to the command of the fleet in the West Indies 414. his success against the Spaniards, and capture of admiral Langara iii, 33. his humane suggestions regarding prisoners 34. relieves Minorca and Gibraltar 35. arrives in the West Indies, *ib.* his actions with the French fleet *ib.* proceeds to the coast of North America 38. compels the island of St. Eustatius to surrender, where he obtains a vast booty 88. his conduct here censured by Burke 115. his defence 116. his glorious victory over the French fleet 143. receives the thanks of parliament, with a peerage and pension 144. melancholy fate of his prizes 157.
- Roebuck, Mr., advocates the cause of Canada in parliament vii, 440. 475. 524. his speech against ministers vii, 550
- Rohillas, their sale to the vizir of Oude by Warren Hastings ii, 284. their gallant, though unavailing resistance, *ib.*
- Roland, M., minister of the interior to Louis XVI. iv, 15
- Rollo, lord, captures Dominica i, 212
- Romana, marquiss de la, transported to Spain from Denmark v, 262. his death 434
- Rome occupied by French troops iv, 367. is seized by the British under captain Louis 409
- Romilly, sir Samuel, his humane endeavors for the mitigation of the criminal code v, 236. 424. vi, 358. is elected member for Westminster 360. puts a period to his existence, *ib.*
- Ross, general, his capture of the city of Washington vi, 164. is mortally wounded in an unsuccessful attack on Baltimore 166
- Rouen, parliament of, their spirited remonstrance i, 406
- Roussillon, its invasion by the Spaniards repelled by the republican forces iv, 124
- Roy, M., nature of his ministry vii, 176
- Royal Academy, establishment of i, 480
- George, loss of iii, 158
- Rullecourt, baron de, takes possession of St. Helier iii, 82. is killed in an engagement with the British 84
- Rumbold, sir Thomas, a bill of pains and penalties carried against him iii, 139
- , sir George, is seized at Hamburg by order of Bonaparte, and imprisoned in the Temple v, 102. is liberated from confinement, *ib.*
- Russell, lord John, his zeal in the cause of parliamentary reform vi, 396. his bill for the disfranchisement of Grampound 397. 413. 460. his unsuccessful endeavors to extend the elective franchise 461. 494. assists in the repeal of the test and corporation acts vii, 163. joins the administration of earl Grey 258. introduces the reform bill to the house of commons 280. becomes leader of the opposition against the administration of sir Robert Peel 417. appointed home secretary 427. proposes the municipal reform bill vii, 431
- Russia, commercial treaty with i, 383. her disputes with Sweden accommodated iii, 405. differences with Great Britain iv, 3. *signus*

a treaty with that power to oppose the ambition of the French republic 108. concludes a provisional treaty with Great Britain 364. forms a northern confederacy against the claims of Great Britain v, 2. concludes a treaty of peace with that power 23. joins Great Britain and Austria in a coalition against France 118. involved in a war with Turkey 179. peace concluded with France and Turkey by the treaty of Tilsit 201. its invasion by Bonaparte, who loses his army in his retreat vi, 24. extent of her empire at the conclusion of the war 192. extent of her territories in the north-west coast of America 475. her disputes with Turkey arranged at the congress of Verona 501. she unites with Great Britain and France in favor of the Greeks vii, 149. commences war with Turkey 168. makes peace with that power 203. her ambitious designs 545

Rutland, duke of, his death in Ireland during his vice-regency iii, 350. regret of the Irish at his loss, ib.

S.

Sadler, Mr., his powerful speech against concession to the catholics vii, 188

Safety-lamp, its discovery by sir Humphrey Davy vi, 326

Salamanca, battle of vi, 46

Saldanha, count, prevented from landing at Terceira by the British government vii, 208

Salem, removal of the legislature to, by general Gage ii, 129. spirited conduct of the inhabitants 131

Salique law of succession, its abolition in Spain vii, 269

Sandwich, lord, appointed first lord of the admiralty i, 309. motion for his censure ii, 388. for his dismissal 389. his defence in the house of peers, ib.

Sandwich Isles, view of society at vii, 29

Saragossa, siege of v, 302. is captured by marshal Lasnes 303

Sardinia kept in check by the republican forces iv, 125. obtains a cession of Genoa at the congress of Vienna vi, 191. its treaty with Great Britain for the extinction of the slave trade vii, 443

Saumarez, sir James, his gallant action with the French and Spaniards v, 32

Savannah taken by the British ii, 379. gallantly defended by general Prevost 404

Saville, sir George, his bill for the relief of Roman catholics passed ii, 354

Saxe Coburg, prince of, assists the duke of York in the capture of Valenciennes iv, 115. succeeds in taking Landrecy 186. orders the allies to retreat at the battle of Fleurus 193

———, prince Leopold of, his marriage with the princess Charlotte vi, 313. refuses the government of Greece vii, 271. becomes king of Belgium, ib.

Sayre, Mr., committed to the Tower on a charge of treason ii, 190. recovers £1000 damages for illegal imprisonment, ib.

Scherer, general, appointed by the Directory to the command of the army of Italy iv, 401. is defeated, and resigns his command, ib.

- Schwartzenburg, prince, assumes the command of the allied armies vi, 78. makes an unsuccessful attack on Dresden, *ib.* his victory at Leipsic 80. crosses the Rhine 124. repulsed by Napoleon 126. storms the heights of Montmartre 133. enters Paris, *ib.*
- Scio, its capture and oppression by the Turks vi, 495
- Scotland, riots in, from apprehension of relief to papists ii, 393. bill passed for the restoration of forfeited estates in iii, 255. restoration of forfeited peerages in vii, 101
- Scott, major, his defence of the government of Warren Hastings ii, 292, 402
- Scottish episcopalians transfer their allegiance to the house of Hanover iii, 301. their emancipation from certain legal restraints iv, 42
- Seabury, Dr., bishop of Connecticut, consecrated at Aberdeen iii, 300
- Sebastiani, general, confirms the resolution of the grand signor in his opposition to Great Britain v, 208
- Secker, archbishop of Canterbury, his death and character i, 481
- Selkirk, lord, his mansion at Kirkcudbright pillaged by Paul Jones ii, 386
- Senegal captured by the French ii, 405
- Seville taken by marshal Victor v, 384
- Shah Allum, the emperor, concludes an alliance with Sujah Dowla for the restoration of Mir Cossim i, 420. hard terms imposed on him by the British 435
- Shah Zaddah invades Bengal, but is routed and taken prisoner by major Carnac i, 214
- Shaw, a life-guardsmen, his remarkable prowess and intrepidity at the battle of Waterloo vi, 231. his death, *ib.*
- Shelburne, earl of, secretary of state i, 396. his duel with Mr. Fullarton iii, 14. is placed at the head of the cabinet 147. compelled to relinquish office 177. created marquis of Lansdowne 256
- Sheridan, Mr., his first speech in parliament iii, 63. specimens of his eloquence in the charges of Warren Hastings at Westminster-hall 355. his animated denunciations of war with France iv, 79. his pungent satire on Mr. Pitt 148. supports the Addington administration v, 58. brilliant specimen of his patriotic eloquence 61. his firmness at the conflagration of Drury-lane theatre 351. his intrigues to exclude the whigs from office vi, 12
- , Dr., his trial and acquittal v. 427
- Sherlock, bishop of London, addresses an affectionate letter to George III. i, 190. his death 255
- Shiel, Mr., his zeal in forwarding the views of the catholics vii, 171
- Shoreham, borough of, disfranchised for corruption ii, 39
- Sicily, defended from the incursions of the French by the energy of Nelson iv, 369. invaded by Murat without success v, 381
- Silk-weavers, tumultuous assemblies of i, 353. are patronised by their majesties 354
- Slavery, remarkable discussion on, at Liverpool vii, 338. abolished in the British colonies 351

- Slave-trade, measures for its abolition commenced by quakers iii, 189. is passed by the commons, but rejected in the upper house v, 93. passed into a law during the whig administration 190
- Sligo, marquis of, his trial and conviction for seducing seamen vi, 61
- Smirke, Mr., his restoration of York Minster vii, 217
- Smith, sir Sidney, his gallantry at the siege of Toulon iv, 140. instance of his generosity 178. captured by the French 279. his escape from confinement 349. compels Bonaparte to raise the siege of Acre 416. assists in forcing the Dardanelles v, 208
- , Mr., condemned to death for exciting the negroes to revolt vii, 26. his death in prison, ib.
- Society Islands, their cultivation and improvement vii, 29
- Soubise, prince de, supersedes marshal Broglio i, 269
- Souham, general, defeats the English and Austrians at Turcoing iv, 188
- Soult, marshal, his intrepidity during the retreat of the French to Genoa iv, 433. horrible slaughter perpetrated by his orders at the battle of Austerlitz v, 142. is repelled by the British at the battle of Corunna 286. advances into Portugal, and captures Oporto 309. is compelled to retreat 314. defeats the Spaniards in the battle of Ocana 340. captures Olivenza 433. is repulsed by the British at Albuera 454. relieves Badajos 459. his communications with Marmont intercepted vi, 44. again assumes the chief command 97. endeavors to relieve St. Sebastian and Pampeluna 98. compels sir Thomas Picton to retire, ib. is dislodged from his position on the Pyrenees by lord Wellington 100. recrosses the Bidassoa, ib. retreats to Bayonne 113. occupies a strong position in front of that city 115. sustains a defeat at Orthes 130. and another at Toulouse 136. sends his adhesion to the provisional government 138. becomes minister of war to Louis XVIII. 199. joins the standard of Napoleon, ib. whom he preserves at the battle of Waterloo 245. collects the scattered wreck of the army, ib. is banished beyond the Rhine 255
- South American states, their spirited resistance to the mother country vi, 400. consuls received from the British government vii, 16. their independence recognised by Great Britain 18
- Southwark bridge, opening of vi, 401
- Spa-fields, seditious meetings at vi, 316. 332
- Spain, war proclaimed against i, 256. in conjunction with her French allies she determines to invade Portugal 258. seizes Falkland islands ii, 28. secretly encourages the Americans 246. determines on hostilities with Great Britain 395. issues a declaration of war 396. joins her fleet with France, ib. attacks West Florida, and the British settlements on the Mississippi 412. failure of her attack on Gibraltar iii, 162. signs a treaty of peace with Great Britain 192. also a convention 298. dispute with Great Britain relative to Nootka Sound 442. which is adjusted 446. her unsuccessful invasion of Roussillon iv, 124. capture of her fortresses 201. renewal of war with Great Britain v, 101. her resistance to French usurpation 223. dissensions of her provincial juntas 258. ill success of her military operations 303.

- tyrannical treatment of her transatlantic colonies 386. her establishment of a new regency vi, 26. her degraded and oppressed state under Ferdinand 140. loss of her transatlantic dominions 400. recall of her Cortes by Ferdinand 446. abolition of the Salique law in vii, 269. distracted by military revolts vii, 449. arrival of the British legion in, *ib.* its treaty with Great Britain for the suppression of the slave-trade 457. interference of Great Britain in the civil wars of 478. 532. affairs of, discussed in Parliament 532. new constitution of, accepted by the queen regent and her daughter 542
- Spithead, mutiny of seamen at iv, 294. suppressed 295
- Spirits, impost on licenses for the sale of, reduced vii, 440
- St. Croix, his gallant defence of Belleisle i, 212
- St. Eustatius, captured by Rodney iii, 88. surrendered to the French 90
- St. John, Newfoundland, captured by the French i, 275. is recovered by the British 276, its conquest by the Americans ii, 182
- St. Lucie, capture of, by the British i, 275. ii, 379
- St. Sebastian, its siege and capture by sir Thomas Graham vi, 101
- St. Vincent, capture of, by the British i, 275
- Staffordshire, riots at vi, 316
- Stamps, duty on, in the American colonies passed i, 350. is repealed 383
- Stanwix, fort, ill success of the British at ii, 313
- States-general in France, meeting of iii, 414
- Staunton, captain, totally defeats Bajee Row vi, 292
- Steel engraving, its introduction vi, 401
- Stevens, admiral, assists colonel Coote in the siege of Pondicherry i, 213
- Stony Point, captured by sir Henry Clinton ii, 406. retaken by general Wayne 408. re-occupied by the British 409
- Strahan, sir Richard, captures four French ships escaped from Trafalgar v, 139
- Struensee, count, his seizure and execution ii, 63
- Stuart, sir John, his defeat of the French at Maida v, 174
- lord Dudley, advocates the cause of Poland in parliament vii, 481
- Suchet, marshal, his ill success in Valencia v, 393. makes himself master of Tortosa 433. storms Tarragona 460. captures Murviedro 468. invests the city of Valencia *ib.* abandons Tarragona, and retires to the Pyrenees vi, 86
- Sujah Dowla, nabob of Oude, affords protection to Mir Cossim i. 420. is totally defeated at the battle of Buxar 422. concludes a treaty of peace with lord Clive 432. throws himself on the generosity of the English 434. purchases the concurrence of Warren Hastings in his conquest of the Rohillas ii, 284. his pusillanimity 286. his death 287
- Sullivan, general, his retaliation on the Indians ii, 411
- Sullivan's island, unsuccessful assault of, by the British ii, 225
- Surinam, its capture by the British iv, 414

- Surrey, earl of, (afterwards duke of Norfolk) renounces the catholic faith iii, 53
- Suspension-bridge, its erection over the Menai Strait vi, 401
- Sutherland, colonel, his defeat of the Ashantees vii, 27
- Suwarrof, general, his diabolical cruelty at Warsaw iv, 211. defeats the army of Macdonald 402. gains the battle of Novi ib. is defeated by Massena in Switzerland, and compelled to retreat 403. resigns his command 404
- Sweden, accedes to a treaty of peace with Frederic III. of Prussia i. 265. insurrection of peasants at 407. revolution effected by Gustavus III. ii, 64. her disputes with Russia and Turkey iii, 404. accommodated 405. her resistance to the claim of a right to search by Great Britain v, 3. compelled to relinquish the northern confederacy 23. joins Great Britain, Austria, and Russia against France 118. elects marshal Bernadotte as the successor to the throne 378. joins the alliance against France vi, 22. obtains possession of Norway at the congress of Vienna 192. its treaty with Great Britain for the extinction of the slave-trade vii, 443
- Switzerland, its invasion and subjugation by the French republic iv, 348. political condition of vii, 544

T.

- Talavera, battle of v, 327
- Talleyrand, his communications with Fox relative to a general peace v, 154. broken off by the death of the latter 157. instrumental to the restoration of the Bourbons vi, 133. created minister for foreign affairs 252
- Tallien, horrible cruelty of iv, 240
- Tarleton, colonel, defeated by the Americans at the Cowpens iii, 94
- Tarragona stormed by the French v, 460
- Tea, alteration in the duty of vii, 439
- Temple, lord, his character i, 180. resigns the privy seal on the retirement of Mr. Pitt 231. loses his seat in the privy council, &c., by his partiality to Wilkes 314. refuses to join the ministry 355. his quarrel with the earl of Chatham 392. their reconciliation ii, 2
- Terceira, unsuccessful invasion of, by Don Miguel vii, 207. its occupation by count Saldanha prevented by the British government 208
- Test and corporation act, repeal of vii, 162
- Texas, establishes its independence vii, 491. designs of the American government on 539
- Texel, defeat of the Dutch fleet at iv, 307
- Thames tunnel, commencement of vii, 88
- Thelwall, Mr. John, apprehended on a charge of high treason iv, 156. tried and acquitted 174
- Thermidorians, triumph of iv, 245
- Thistlewood committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason vi, 333. the charge abandoned 339. takes the lead in a con-

- spiracy to assassinate the cabinet ministers 406. his detection and apprehension 409. his trial and execution 410
 Thompson, Mr., disputes the authority of the house of commons ii, 41
 ———, general, his unsuccessful attack on the British forces ii, 221
 Thurlow, Mr., lord chancellor ii, 416. his advice to George III. iii, 180. the great seal stolen from his house 256
 Ticonderoga fort, surprised by colonel Allen ii, 181. recovered by the British 323
 Tierney, Mr., his duel with Mr. Pitt iv, 330. joins Mr. Canning's ministry vii, 138
 Tilsit, treaty of v, 201.
 Tippoo Saib, son of Hyder Ali, defeated by the British iii, 70. becomes sovereign of Mysore at the death of his father 78. deserted by his French allies at the conclusion of the American war 79. loses the city of Bednore, which he recaptures 80. concludes a treaty of peace with the British 81. his arbitrary and cruel conduct *ib.* his aggressions on the company's territories and allies iv, 58. besieged by lord Cornwallis in Seringapatam 67. compelled to make a disadvantageous peace 69. renews his intrigues against the English 379. is defeated, and retires to Seringapatam 385. besieged in that fortress by general Harris 386. his death 388
 Tobago, conquest of, by the British i, 275. is reduced by the French under de Bouillé iii, 91. recaptured by the British iv, 176
 Torgau, battle of i, 196
 Tortosa, its capture by the French v, 433
 Tortuga captured by the French i, 344. is restored *ib.*
 Toulon, its siege by the republicans iv, 135. means suggested by Bonaparte to effect its capture 136. horrible massacre at 141
 Toulouse, battle of vi, 136
 Toussaint l'Ouverture submits to the French arms under the promise of pardon, and dies in prison v, 57
 Townley, Mr., his collection of statues purchased by government vi, 61
 Townshend, Mr. Charles, made chancellor of the exchequer, i. 396. his vacillating principles 445. his premature death 446
 ———, lord, viceroy of Ireland i, 448. his popularity, *ib.* establishes a preponderance of English interests 487. is displaced by the earl of Harcourt ii, 87
 Trafalgar, battle of v, 132
 Trincomalee stormed by the British iii, 75. is recaptured 76
 Trollope, captain, his gallant encounter with six French frigates iv, 280
 Troppau, congress of vi, 449
 Trotter, Mr., paymaster to lord Melville v, 110. investigation of his conduct 111
 Tryon, governor, his expedition into Connecticut ii, 407
 Tucker, dean, first advocates the liberation of America i, 334

- Tuckey, captain, falls a victim to the climate in exploring the interior of Africa vi, 327
- Turcoing, battle of iv, 188
- Turgot, M., placed over the finance department by Louis XVI. ii, 127
- Turkey, by the instigations of France, proclaims war against Great Britain and Russia v, 179. peace restored vi, 22. her dissensions with the Greek colonies 475. horrible cruelties of 495. her disputes with Russia arranged at the congress of Verona 500. her haughty rejection of all interference in the affairs of Greece vii, 149. destruction of her navy in the battle of Navarino 151. is engaged in war with Russia 168. obtains a disadvantageous peace 203. escapes the designs of Russia by the intervention of Great Britain and France 361
- Turks invest Missolonghi vii, 92
- Tyrawley, lord, commands the British auxiliaries in Portugal i, 271

U.

- Ulm, surrender of, by general Mack v, 128
- Ulster, extensive insurrections in i, 487. subdued 488
- Union with Ireland effected iv, 426
- Unitarian dissenters relieved from pains and penalties vi, 71
- Ushant, naval engagement off ii, 380
- Uxbridge, earl of, commands the cavalry at Waterloo, and loses his leg in that battle vi, 244. created marquis of Anglesea 259

V.

- Vaccine inoculation, introduction of, by Dr. Jenner v, 54
- Valencia invested by Suchet v, 468
- Valenciennes besieged and taken by the duke of York iv, 116
- Vandamme, general, his disaster in Bohemia vi, 78
- Van Diemen's Land, its advances in civilisation vii, 29
- Vansittart, Mr., his endeavors to adjust disputes between Mir Cossim and the company i, 413. his agreement disavowed by the council 415
- Vaughan, general, assists Rodney in the reduction of St. Eustatia iii, 88. his defence of his conduct against the censures of Burke 116
- Vergennes, count de, his interference in favour of the Americans ii, 242. his reply to the commissioners 245. his active interference in their behalf 337
- Verona, insurrection and massacre of the French at iv, 310. congress at vi, 500. its arrangements ib.
- Verplanks captured by sir Henry Clinton ii. 406
- Versailles, disturbances at iii, 424
- Vice-chancellor, appointment of vi, 62
- Victor, marshal, his attack on the British repelled v, 327. advises Joseph Bonaparte to risk a battle at Talavera, ib. takes possession of Seville 384. is defeated by general Graham at Barosa 438
- Victoria, princess, her birth vi, 402. provision made for her by parliament vii, 284. succeeds to the throne 558

- Vienna, its occupation by Napoleon v, 139. 341. peace concluded at 342. congress of, opened vi, 158. its arrangements 185
- Villa Flor, count, defeats the troops of Don Miguel at Terceira vii, 207
- Vilatte, surprise of his corps by lord Wellington vi, 87
- Villèle, M. de, overthrow of his ministry vii, 176
- Villeneuve, admiral, puts to sea from Toulon v, 122. his squadron dispersed off Ferrol by sir Robert Calder 125. takes shelter in Cadiz, ib. quits that port 129. his skilful preparation for an engagement 132. his total defeat and capture 137. his return to France, and melancholy fate, ib.
- Vinegar-hill, defeat of the Irish insurgents at iv, 338
- Virginia, assembly of, their violent resolutions i, 361. petition the British legislature against the stamp act 371. compel lord Dunmore to abdicate the government ii, 185. successful operations of the British in 405
- Vittoria, battle of vi, 91
- Vixen, capture of the, by the Russians vii, 547
- Volunteers, demonstrations of their public spirit in their resistance to the threats of French invasion v, 77

W.

- Wager of battle, extraordinary instance of vi, 363. law passed for its repeal, ib.
- Wagram, battle of v, 341
- Walcheren, isle of, its capture by the British v. 347. dreadful mortality of the troops, and its relinquishment, ib.
- Waldegrave, dowager-countess of, her marriage with the duke of Gloucester ii, 57
- Wales, princess-dowager of, her death and character ii, 64
- Wall, Mr., the Spanish minister, his conference with lord Bristol i, 227
- Walmoden, general, left by the duke of York in the command of the allied army iv, 207. is compelled to quit Holland, 209.
- Wardle, colonel, his charges against the duke of York v, 292
- Warren, sir J. B., his gallant engagement with the French iv, 176. captures two French line of battle ships v, 171
- Warrington, captain, his trial vii, 295
- Warsaw sacked by Suwarroff iv, 211
- Washington, George, his appointment as commander-in-chief of the republican forces ii, 176. his life and character, ib. his arrival at Boston, and disposition of his army 179. difficulties of his situation, ib. gains possession of Dorchester-heights 217. makes a triumphal entry into Boston, 218. defends New York against general Howe and his brother 228. a conspiracy detected against his person, ib. sustains a severe defeat at Brooklyn 235. evacuates New York, and retreats to White Plains 248. is here attacked, ib. his able retreat behind the Delaware 250. his brilliant successes at Trenton and Prince-town 254. recovers great part of the Jerseys, and saves Pennsylvania 257. is defeated at Brandywine 305. makes an unsuccessful attack on the British at German-town 308. selects Valley Forge for winter quarters 309.

sufferings of his troops, 309. he remonstrates with congress 311. attacks Clinton on his retreat from Philadelphia 372. reprimands general Lee 373. counteracts the French plans regarding Canada 379. his cautious policy 411. invested with the supreme command of the French army in America iii, 44. refuses to mitigate the sentence of major André 49. his schemes to mislead sir Henry Clinton 52. suppresses a mutiny in his army 93. invests York-town 103. compels lord Cornwallis to surrender 104. his sternness in retaliating the murder of Huddy 154. his civil services at the conclusion of the war 195. bids adieu to his officers 197. resigns his command to congress, *ib.* chosen president of the United States 198. re-elected to that station 199. his final retreat and death, *ib.*

Washington, fort, captured by the British ii, 249

———, city of, its capture and devastation by the British vi, 164

Waterloo, battle of vi, 226

Waterloo-bridge, opening of vi, 347

Watson, Dr., bishop of Llandaff, his anticipations of the happy effects resulting from the union with Ireland iv, 377

———, sen., a ringleader in the Spa-fields riots vi, 317. committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason, with three others 333. his trial and acquittal 339

———, jun., shoots a gentleman in the Spa-fields riots vi, 317. escapes to America, *ib.*

Wattignies, battle of iv, 120

Wayne, general, surprised by the British ii, 307. retakes Stony Point 409. instance of his gallantry, *ib.*

Wellesley, marquis, appointed governor-general of India iv, 381. expostulates with Tipoo on his hostile movements 383. directs the advance of the army 384. his judicious partition of the Mysorean territory 389. satisfactorily arranges the affairs of the Carnatic 391. reduces the power of the Mahratta princes 393. is succeeded in his government by the marquis Cornwallis 397. review of his administration, *ib.* appointed envoy extraordinary in Spain v, 333. promoted to the office of foreign secretary, 350. resigns his office vi, 3. he is appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland 477. his unpopularity with the Orange party vii, 5. opposes the restriction on public meetings in Ireland 373.

———, sir Arthur, (duke of Wellington) his victorious career in India iv, 395. accompanies lord Cathcart to Denmark v, 205. lands at Corunna 247. superseded by sir H. Burrard 251. obtains a decisive victory at Vimiero 254. returns to England after the convention of Cintra 256. assumes the command of the British army in Portugal 311. recovers Oporto 314. his difficulties 315. he advances into Spain 320. his interview with Cuesta 323. defeats the French at Talavera 328. is raised to the peerage 335. retreats into Portugal 340. his distrust of the Spaniards 385. his plans counteracted by the Portuguese regency 391. he repels the attack of Massena and Ney on his position at Busacos 400. retreats to the lines of Torres Vedras 405. his spirited remonstrances with the British and Portuguese governments 409.

- compels the enemy to retreat 410. overtakes them at Pombal 442. defeats Massena at Fuentes Onoro 451. gets possession of Almeida ib. invests Badajos 458. threatens to resign his command 460. repels the attack of Marmont at El Bodon 464. invests Ciudad Rodrigo 466. takes the place by storm vi, 29. his illness and recovery 34. storms Badajos 37. overtakes Marmont at Salamanca 44. his signal victory at that place 49. enters Madrid in triumph 51. his unsuccessful siege of Burgos 52. retires into Portugal 54. repairs to Lisbon 55. receives a grant of £100,000 from parliament 60. surprises a French corps of Villatte at Salamanca 87. attacks the French rear-guard at Morales 88. inflicts a signal defeat on the enemy at Vittoria 91. promoted to the dignity of field marshal 96. invests Pampeluna and St. Sebastian, ib. dislodges Soult from his position on the Pyrenees 100. issues a humane proclamation previous to his invasion of France 111. his passage of the Nivelle 112. invests Bayonne 129. defeats Soult at Orthes 130. and gains a complete victory at Toulouse 136. he arrives in England, and is raised to the dukedom 149. his reception by the house of commons, ib. deputed by the regent as ambassador to the congress of Vienna 159. assumes the command of the British forces in Belgium 208. repels the attack of Ney at Quatre Bras 216. totally overthrows the enemy at Waterloo 226. issues a pacific proclamation to the French people 247. enters Paris 248. his answer to the appeal of marshal Ney 253. receives a parliamentary grant of £200,000 for the erection of a mansion 258. ambassador at the congress of Verona 500. promoted to the office of commander-in-chief vii, 113. resigns office at the commencement of Mr. Canning's administration 124. his explanations in the house of peers 131. resumes the command of the army 146. which he again resigns, and accepts the office of premier 148. his differences with Mr. Huskisson 157. procures the repeal of the test and corporation acts 162. refuses to admit the explanations of Mr. Huskisson 166. apathy of his foreign policy 168. his letter to Dr. Curtis 173. determines to carry the catholic question 182. completes the enactment of that great measure 198. fights a duel with the earl of Winchelsea, and excites the enmity of the tories 200. procures the abolition of the beer and leather duties 226. decline of his ministry in public estimation 244. 253. postpones the king's visit to the city 254. dissolution of his cabinet 256. opposes the reform bill 288. his house assaulted by the mob 293. becomes foreign secretary 414. resigns office 426. opposes the municipal reform bill 433
- Welsh judicature, its abolition vii, 235
- West Indies, abolition of slavery in vii, 351. operation of the relaxed law relative to slaves in 444
- West Point, fortification of, committed to general Arnold ii, 407
- Wetherell, sir Charles, his violent opposition to the claims of the catholics vii, 190. opposes the reform bill 283. his narrow escape at Bristol 294
- Wexford, its capture by the Irish rebels iv, 339. relieved by general Moore 343

- Weymouth, lord, appointed secretary of state i, 447. his letter of approbation to the Surrey magistrates denounced by Wilkes 489. complains of a breach of privilege 492. resigns his office ii, 37
- Wheble, Mr., arrested by the sergeant at arms ii, 41. prosecutes the officers by whom he has been seized, ib.
- Whitelocke, general, makes an unsuccessful attack on Buenos Ayres v, 210. his disgraceful capitulation with the Spanish commandant 211. is brought to a court-martial, and cashiered, ib.
- White Plains, action at ii, 248
- Whitworth, lord, British ambassador at the court of Bonaparte v, 57
- Wilberforce, Mr., takes the lead in the abolition of the slave trade iii, 364. renewal of his exertions on that subject 396. iv, 4. 50. his opposition to Mr. Pitt 214. makes unsuccessful motions for the abolition of the slave trade 224. 330. 378. obtains its adoption by the commons v, 93. and its final enactment 183
- Wilkes, Mr., his violent invectives in the North Briton i, 310. his factious and immoral conduct, ib. is prosecuted for a libel on George III. 312. is apprehended by a general warrant, and committed to the Tower 313. applies for a writ of *habeas corpus*, and is released on a breach of privilege 314. his renewed violence, ib. retires to France 315. is censured by resolutions of the house of commons 319. fights a duel with Mr. Martin 320. obtains a verdict in his favor against the secretaries of state 323. escapes to the continent 324. expelled the house of commons 326. receives sentence of outlawry 328. returns to England, and makes unsuccessful overtures to the Rockingham administration 472. is returned to parliament for Middlesex 473. is committed to prison by the court of king's bench 474. alarming riots of his partisans 476. sentence of the court for the publication of obscene and seditious libels 479. his violent declamations 489. is expelled the house of commons 494. re-elected, ib. is displaced in favor of colonel Luttrell 496. is chosen an alderman of London, ib. discharged from confinement ii, 13. his struggles for popularity with Horne Tooke 30. resists with impunity the orders of the commons 41. is elected lord mayor, and presents an address to the king for the dismissal of ministers 162. his furious philippic against the corporation of London 214. succeeds in his motion for expunging from the journals of the house of commons the resolutions regarding the Middlesex election iii, 130. his address to Mr. Pitt 238
- William IV., his birth i, 367. sails as a midshipman under Rodney ii, 415. opposes the abolition of the slave trade iv, 53. conducts the allied sovereigns to England vi, 150. his marriage 356. accepts the office of lord high admiral vii, 125. his resignation of that post 167. succeeds to the throne 238. simplicity of his habits, ib. his appearance in public, and great popularity 243. postpones his visit to the city 254. his coronation 285. goes in state to visit Oxford 453. and Greenwich Hospital 454. discourages Orange lodges 459. private life of 492. his last illness and death 556
- Williams, Mr., sentenced to the pillory for republishing the North Briton i, 368

- Williams, John, commits suicide in Coldbath-fields prison v, 430
- Williamson, Mr., atrocious murder of himself and family v, 429
- Wilson, Dr. Thomas, his servility reproved by George III. i, 197
- sir Robert, his zealous co-operation in organizing the defence of Portugal v, 305. assists in the escape of Lavallette vi, 254. deprived of his commission for his conduct at the funeral of queen Caroline 473
- Wyndham, Mr., his support of the principles of Mr. Burke in opposition to the French revolution iii, 439. iv, 79. accepts the office of secretary of war v, 150. equity and utility of his military arrangements 159. his death 352
- Wolfe Tone convicted of high treason, and puts a period to his existence iv, 347
- Wolseley, sir Charles, chosen member of parliament for Birmingham by a tumultuous assembly vi, 383. his trial and imprisonment 384
- Woodfall, the printer, prosecuted for a libel on king George III. by Junius ii, 22
- Wraxall, sir Nathaniel, his graphic description of the intelligence of lord Cornwallis's surrender to the Americans iii, 108
- Wright, captain, taken prisoner by the French iv, 279. his death v, 103
- , Susannah, her trial and conviction for continuing the publication of Carleile's blasphemies vi, 499
- Wurmser, general, takes Manheim from the republicans iv, 244. defeated by Bonaparte 275. surrenders the citadel of Mantua to Bonaparte 308
- Wyoming, its destruction by American savages ii, 376

Y.

- Yeo, sir James, his reduction of Oswego vi, 162. is compelled to retire from Sackett's harbor 163. prefers an accusation against sir George Prevost 164
- York, destruction of its cathedral by fire vii, 217
- , Edward, duke of, his death i, 446
- , cardinal, his death v, 216
- , duchess of, her marriage iv, 18. her death and character vi, 445
- Yorke, Mr., accepts the seals, and is raised to the peerage ii, 7. puts a period to his existence ib.
- , sir Joseph, demands the recall of the Dutch governor of St. Eustatia ii, 276. his remonstrances with the States-General on their partiality to the Americans 414.

Z.

- Zoutman, admiral, engages the English fleet off the Doggerbank iii, 87

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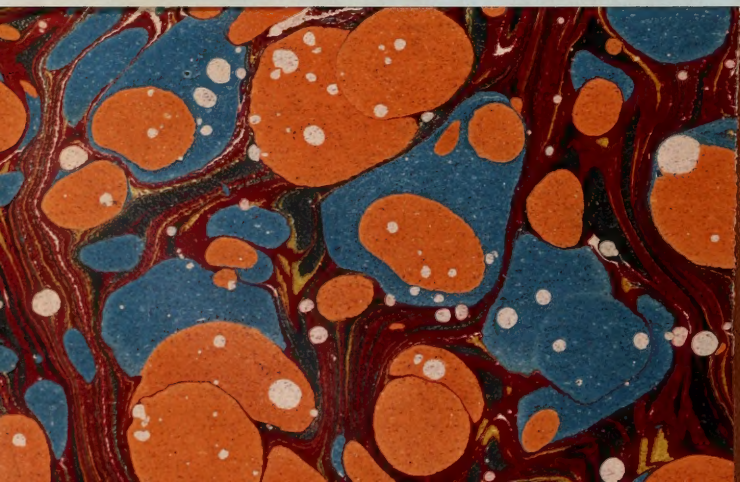
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